

DEMOCRATIC HOUSING TENANTS ASSOCIATION

CHAIRPERSON: Ms Zanele Ntshotsho

Eli Spilkin Street

MTHATHA

5099

30 July 2020

0732806791

ATT: THE PRESIDENT:

UNITED DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

Member of Parliament: GENERAL H.B. HOLOMISA

REQUEST FOR INTERVENTION: EVICTION OF MTHATHA RESIDENTS: DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Democratic Housing Tenants Association (DHTA) consists of 72 tenants, all of whom reside in properties administered by the Department of Public Works (DoPW) / Eastern Cape Development Corporation (ECDC). Many of said tenants have been in occupation of their residences for a minimum period of ten (10) years, and up to thirty five (35) years in some cases.

Since 1994, no maintenance or repairs to the houses have been undertaken by the aforementioned departments. Given the disrepair and ever-depreciating condition of the residences, occupants have been compelled to undertake crucial maintenance and all repairs at their own considerable expense.

Numerous meetings with Public Works have taken place, dating from as far back as 2001, where discussions were held regarding the opportunity for tenants to purchase the houses they have been occupying – and paying rent for – for so long.

Despite various commitments and promises by the DoPW, which included several housing disposal lists forwarded to the DHTA committee, there has been no progress or way forward. (See attached correspondence, dating from 2001).

Due to the absence of crucial maintenance, a standard rental agreement of R1200 per month, per residence, was reached with the MEC for Roads and Public Works; Ms Marawu. Tenants have diligently continued to honour this agreement.

Furthermore, attempts were made to engage with the premier of the Province of the Eastern Cape; Mr Mabuyane. A meeting was held with Advisor to the Premier; Mr Qupe, on 30 June 2019, at the Premier's office in Bisho. Mr Qupe requested a list of all tenants who expressed their willingness to

purchase their residences, and at the established historical value, due the dilapidated state of the houses. Mr Qupe asserted that he would expedite the speedy resolution of this situation in Mthatha.

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Given the abovementioned, tenants were deeply shocked and most confused to find NOTICE OF MOTION – PIE APPLICATION and NOTICE OF MOTION: EVICTION PROCEEDINGS notices simultaneously and unceremoniously dropped outside their respective residences. Said notices threatened eviction with immediate effect, from 7 July 2020. On investigation, it was found that all tenants of government residences in the city of Mthatha had received such notices. Indeed, more than 80% of the legal fraternity in the town is currently engaged in this matter, under the direct instruction of Attorney at Law; M. Notyesi.

In response to this attempt by the DoPW to evict tenants, the DHTA committee requested an informal meeting with MEC Babalo Madikizela to seek clarity on these sudden eviction notices. The MEC subsequently scheduled a meeting with departmental officials on 25 June 2020. Upon attendance at the meeting the DHTA committee was surprised to find that a delegation of people was in attendance, among them the following:

- ANC Regional Secretary of O.R. TAMBO
- Members of the ANC Youth League
- Attorney at Law Notyesi
- Legal representatives and Officials of the Department of Public Works.

The committee raised its objection at the presence of non-stakeholders, despite which, the MEC continued with the meeting, leaving the DHTA Committee feeling pressured to remain to ensure it upheld its mandate to its members. No resolution was reached by the conclusion of the meeting.

The MEC openly requested that DoPW officials meet with the DHTA Committee within two weeks from the 25th June 2020. To date, no such meeting has been arranged or held. MEC also requested Mr Notyesi to stop eviction letters as from the date of the meeting, 25 June 2020, but he continued.

General Holomisa, it is with great humility that we approach the United Democratic Movement to urgently intervene on our behalf. It is quite apparent that our only recourse to protect the democratic rights and the quality of life of our members lies with the UDM. Please, hear our pain:

- Our people are suffering in the throes of the Covid crisis.
- Our people are being traumatised by this callous ill-treatment by the DoPW.
- Our children were born and raised in these homes, which may now be taken away from them.
- Lives of parents have been lost, leaving children to deal with the threat of potential eviction, alone.
- Certain individuals have been wielding such a debilitating power over people's lives that the DHTA can no longer bear this intolerable cruelty: In particular, the apparent unprofessional

conduct of Attorney at Law Notyesi, whose name appears on all eviction-related notices and who clearly appears to be acting with impunity.

On behalf of the DHTA and its Committee I would like to express our deepest gratitude for your perusal and consideration of this, our most humble request. Attached please find documentation in support of the aforementioned, namely:

1. Letter: Mr D Mafu (25 September 2001)
2. Minutes of meeting with DoPW official Mr V Nogantshi as chairperson (31 October 2012)
3. Disposal of Housing Lists (2007 and 2013)
4. Letter to the Premier (12 June 2020)

Batho Pele!

Humbly Yours



Zanele Ntshotsho

Chairperson:
Democratic Housing Tenants Association (DHTA)

20/07/2020