



HOMELESS?: From left, Musa Nzuza, Duduzile Nkabinde and Thandukwazi Shange from the Enduduzweni Centre for the Disabled say the Department of Social Development is trampling on their rights by evicting them.

PICTURE: DOCTOR NGCOBO

Disabled residents facing eviction

Samkelo Mtshali

THIRTY-SIX residents at the Enduduzweni Centre for the Disabled in uMlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, have accused the Department of Social Development of trampling on their rights by kicking them out of the home.

Duduzile Nkabinde, 56, is partially blind and has lived at the centre for 18 years.

She said the officials from the department had called residents to urgent meetings in January, but most of them were on holiday.

When they returned, they were taken to a meeting at the department's offices at Emaweleni in uMlazi, where "we were told that the centre would be shutting down for renovations under orders from the Department of Public Works".

"We refuse to leave until they tell us where they expect us to go and until they find an alternative place for us to stay," Nkabinde said.

She said they had been told to move out by February 6 and, after they refused, the date had been extended to February 10.

"This government only knows us when it's time to give them our votes, but when we want our rights to be protected they are nowhere to be seen," said Nkabinde.

Thandukwazi Shange, 34, has lived there since 2010, when he and others were brought into the centre by the department for a skills development programme.

He alleged after they completed their six months' training they were given jobs, but had never been paid despite all their work being sold.

"How are we going to go home

empty-handed, with no money and no recognition of the work we have done here?" asked Shange.

He said it was not the first time the department had threatened to kick them out.

"After we refused to leave in 2013, they even stopped giving us food and we now depend on our grants to survive," Shange said.

Ncumisa Ndelu, KZN Department of Social Development spokesperson, said people needed to understand the home was not a residential centre, but a skills development centre for disabled people where they acquired skills to help them make an income.

Desmond D'Sa, of the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, said he was shocked that government wanted to evict "harmless people".