

'Fix our schools!'

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Parents and residents of Selwane have joined forces to protest and close down Vatswatsi primary school that has over 800 learners and Masaswivona high school that has just over 550 learners on February 15, as they are allegedly dilapidated and unsafe to use for learners.

The schools have classrooms with roofs that have been blown away by the storm and their toilets are in an appalling condition.

Learners are afraid to use them as they are reported to have spotted snakes inside.

The schools also have apparently also have a backlog of textbooks in shortage and up to 200 learners are crammed into one classroom for lessons.

The teachers and principal have to share a room which is congested as it is also used as a staff room, storeroom for textbooks, kitchen and office for the principal.

"Our school was affected by a storm in May 2015, we reported this matter to the circuit manager and we were told that we should write a formal letter.

"We sat down as the school governing body and wrote a letter to the circuit, tribal authorities, and different departments.

The department of public works and education came to the school to see the condition it was in and saw that the school is severely damaged.

"In 2016, another storm hit our school and

once again we reported it and wrote letters to the departments respectively, they sent representatives in January to inform us that renovations on the school would start in February but to date, nothing has happened.

"The school is not safe as the ceilings are caving in and the toilets are also in bad condition.

"We do not know when the government will hear our cry, as parents we say there will be no school until we see work being done to renovate our school", said school governing body member, Phumzile Khosa.

A meeting with the school governing body, circuit representatives and SAPS was held on February 16.

They were told that they should wait for the budget which will be available in April, this angered the residents as they wonder what happened to the budget since 2014.

They were also told that mobile classes cannot be

issued at present as there is no budget for that either.

They have since applied to legalise their strict action and vow that there will be no school until their grievances are attended to.

Roads have been barricaded making it hard for cars, taxis and buses to travel in and out of the area. The quote, "Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education" by Franklin D. Roosevelt is well suited for the situation in Selwane.

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