

Court action to stop sale of Tafelberg must be welcomed

THE ANC welcomes the decision by Minister of Human Settlements Lindiwe Sisulu to take Premier Zille and the Western Cape government to court to stop the sale of Tafelberg to private interests. We have always maintained that the site is ideal for social housing.

We are also aware of many Sea Point domestic workers who have been saving for years in anticipation of accessing social housing on that site.

The three reasons advanced by the DA provincial government for proceeding with the sale have proved to be baseless. They argued that Sea Point does not fall within the “restructuring zone” for social housing.

This has been disputed by both the national Department of Housing and the City of Cape Town. Minister Sisulu has made it clear that subsidies for social housing would be available in the City Bowl and surrounds restructuring zone, which includes Sea Point. Secondly, the DA's argument that the National Treasury has instructed them to use provincial resources to fund provincial needs has been rejected by the Treasury.

Thirdly, the DA's argument that it has identified other properties for social housing in Green Point and Woodstock has been rejected, as no time frames or concrete commitments in this regard have been made.

The provisions of Gama (the Government Immovable Asset Management Act) make it clear that any department (in this case provincial Public Works) wishing to dispose of state land must consider whether the asset in question can be used:

- by another user (ie by a national or provincial department) or jointly by different users;
- in relation to social development objectives of government; and
- in relation to government's socio-economic objectives, including land reform, black economic empowerment, alleviation of poverty, job creation and redistribution of wealth.

The DA's decision has clearly

flouted these legal provisions. In fact the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements made a written request in 2013 that Tafelberg be used for social housing. Despite our requests in the legislature, we have never been provided with the minutes of the meeting where this request was considered by the provincial property committee.

We have written to the Public Protector and asked for a meeting in which we can share allegations of conflict of interest against senior advisers for the Department of Public Works and the premier. We believe that an urgent investigation is required by the Public Protector.

The DA has once again shown that it stands for the interests of the wealthy and privileged and acts in ways which perpetuate the spatial divides in Cape Town.

What is required is a community-driven campaign to access all well-located national, provincial and municipal public land so that affordable housing can be provided to densify and integrate our cities and towns.

Minister Sisulu's intervention is a clear example of the political will required to reverse the negative impact of apartheid spatial planning and the legacy of colonialism.

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