

Ex-Jozi@Work employees 'rioted'

NONDUMISO ZWANE

THE MMC for environment and infrastructure services has condemned the disruption of service delivery by former Jozi@Work employees at the weekend.

They allegedly vandalised city infrastructure on Friday, which on Saturday escalated to using trucks to attack two contracted Pikitup staff members.

MMC Nico de Jager said Pikitup was in possession of the registration numbers of the trucks.

"The trucks used by Jozi@work members do not belong to Pikitup. The city is working with policing authorities to identify the owners of the vehicles in order to lay criminal charges against those responsible for disruptions to services and damage to property," De Jager said.

He said they were also informed that the planned disruptions were set to continue.

"As a precautionary measure, additional JMPD officers have been deployed," he said.

Piles of rubbish had closed a lane in Hillbrow between Claim and Joubert streets.

The MMC said Pikitup staff tried to clean the mess left behind over the course of the past three days but were prevented from doing so by those belonging to Jozi@Work.

"As a result, Joubert Park and Rissik Street in Braamfontein are still badly affected and have been prioritised for cleaning," De Jager said the reasons for the most recent disruptions have not been communicated to the city and amount to nothing but lawless action.

In May this year, the three-month Pikitup contracts signed by former Jozi@Work beneficiaries through the city's Expanded Public Works Pro-



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gramme (EPWP) expired.

"I wish to reiterate that the city has been clear about the temporary and rotational nature of the contracts and has at no point stated or implied that anyone would be entitled to an extension or that the three-month contracts would result in full-time employment," De Jager said.

He said the Jozi@Work programme was a wolf in sheep's clothing, benefiting only the middlemen who were awarded multimillion-rand contracts to run projects. "Through our new approach to temporary work oppor-

tunities, residents will be given work opportunities directly through the city and not through middlemen, thereby increasing the number of people who can fairly benefit from these work opportunities.

"The city respects the rights of organisations or individuals to engage in legal and peaceful protests.

"However, we will not tolerate any form of illegal protest action which seeks to vandalise city property and disrupt services to our residents," the MMC said.

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