

Eyethu Northern - 12 Dec 2017

Workers want permanent jobs

Protesting workers caused disruption in Jozini last Friday. A municipal vehicle was set alight by protesters. Workers want permanent jobs. Muzi Zincume, EXPANDED Public Works Programme workers in Jozini Municipality, staged a protest last Friday, demanding their one-year contracts be extended until the end of next year or be hired permanently. The workers refused to sign contracts, which end this month, so new participants can be brought into the system. One worker, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said he was disturbed by the conduct of his colleagues who held the municipality to ransom. All of us knew that our contracts would end this year to make way for others to get employment. I'm surprised to hear that some are demanding to be hired permanently, knowing full well that the municipality only facilitates this programme and accounts to the national Department of Public Works, he said.

Jozini Municipal Manager Kuhlekonke Khumalo said the participants started their protest on Friday, blocking a road, burning tyres and turning dustbins upside down. On Sunday morning a new vehicle was set alight while it was parked at the municipal premises. It is not clear at this stage who is responsible. 'We have met with the workers to explain that we cannot extend their contracts again as we did last year. Fifty out of 120 have agreed to make way for others,' he said. Police spokesperson Captain Senzo Gumede said they were investigating a case of damage to property after the vehicle was set alight. 'For now the situation is calm, as we have deployed police officers in the area to ensure stability after a road was blocked on Monday morning,' he said.