



PAYING RESPECTS: Family members of the slain taxi owner in Keiskammahoek visiting the scene of the killing

Picture: SUPPLIED

No joy for community after killing

Pensioner's death follows protests on state of roads

By **ZINGISA MVUMVU**
Senior Political Reporter

AS THE country yesterday commemorated Human Rights Day, it was a bleak day for Keiskammahoek residents, who are still reeling with shock after Thembekile Fana was killed, allegedly by the police during a service delivery protest on Monday.

Residents, ANC provincial bosses

and government leaders yesterday visited the area where the 62-year-old was killed.

Both ANC provincial secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi and cooperative governance and traditional affairs MEC Fikile Xasa admitted that government had failed the Keiskammahoek community, leading to the death of the pensioner who was one of the protesters that took to the street and demanded proper roads from government.

Yesterday, Xasa and Ngcukayitobi experienced first-hand the realities of the people of Qoboqobo as they travelled in the appalling gravel road leading to the deceased's home some 5km outside town.

However, theirs was not so bad a

ride as they were travelling in an Audi and BMW SUVs respectively, as compared to residents who have smaller cars.

Yesterday residents told of how they had been chased by police, who allegedly shot and killed Fana at close range.

Police oversight body, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (Ipid) is investigating the case.

The community started their fight in 2013 when they submitted their complaints to then premier Noxolo Kiviet, before doing the same to incumbent Phumulo Masualle.

They also submitted a petition to Amahlathi municipality mayor Pateka Qaba.

Ngcukayitobi yesterday promised

that Calata House would hold Masualle, Xasa, roads and public works MEC Thandiswa Marawu, Amathole District Municipality Nomfusi Nxawe and Qaba to account as to why residents' grievances had not been addressed five years after they were initially raised.

"It is very saddening and devastating what has happened here for police to chase protesting residents from the taxi rank to the bushes by the river.

"But the sticking point here is the non-responsiveness by our government systems, as you hear this community has for years been engaging the municipality and provincial government, but no firm response was given.

"Therefore as the ANC we will take up these particular problems and seek clarity immediately from the premier and the MEC for Cogta, MEC for public works and two mayors – that of the district and the other of the local municipality," said Ngcukayitobi.

Ngcukayitobi said the ANC would side with the community, saying it was appalling that this had happened during Human Rights month.

Sanco in the area, which was leading the service delivery protest, said government should ensure that Fana's death was not in vain by tarring the road from town leading to where he was gunned down and erecting a remembrance tombstone. — zingisam@dispatch.co.za