

ANC promises follow shooting of protester

Delegation vows urgent action on ignored residents' complaints over past five years

Zingisa Mvumvu

AN ANC delegation led by provincial secretary Lulama Ngcukayitobi and Cooperative Governance MEC Fikile Xasa visited Qoboqobo outside Keiskammahoek yesterday, where a service delivery protester was shot dead, allegedly by police.

The incident on Monday led to the ejection from office of the town's mayor and some municipal officials by an angry mob the next day.

The protesters had been demanding improved roads.

Ngcukayitobi and Xasa, who had to travel the appalling road to shooting victim Thembekile Fana's home 5km outside Keiskammahoek, admitted yesterday that the government had failed the residents.

The residents told the delegation how they had been chased by police, who allegedly shot Fana, 62, at close range.

Police oversight body the Independent Police Investigative Directorate is investigating.

The residents first submitted their complaints five years ago to

then-premier Noxolo Kiviet, and later to incumbent Phumulo Masualle.

They also gave a petition to Amahlathi Municipality mayor Pateka Qaba.

Ngcukayitobi said the residents' complaints needed to be attended to urgently.

He promised that Calata House would hold Masualle, Xasa, Roads

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and Public Works MEC Thandiswa Marawu, the Amathole District Municipality's Nomfusi Nxawe and Qaba to account on why the grievances had still not been addressed five years later.

“It is devastating what has happened here – for police to chase protesting residents from the taxi rank to the bushes by the river,” Ngcukayitobi said.

“But the sticking point here is the non-responsiveness by our

government systems. 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 . . . so all concerns raised in the five-year-old memorandum of demands are addressed immediately.”

Xasa said government officials should take this as a moment for rebirth in how they serviced communities – and listen to their cries.

“This should never happen again,” he said.

Sanco, which was leading the service delivery protest, said the 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 erect a remembrance tombstone.



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