

Protest closes R61 for five hours

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PORT St Johns mayor Nomvuzo Mlombile-Cingo spent nearly two hours yesterday morning trying to reason with angry protestors who had blocked the R61.

Motorists were stranded for five hours. The protestors reside in villages near the Majola tea estate and at the root of their unhappiness is a 70km stretch of gravel road linking their homes to the R61.

When the Daily Dispatch arrived in Mampube near Chaguba village almost 200 slogan-chanting villagers had blocked the R61 and Mlombile-Cingo was pleading with them to

open up the road. She asked that they instead send a delegation to negotiate with the municipality.

Luzuko Telo, speaking on behalf of the aggrieved villagers, said they were fed up with empty promises from government. "They have been making promise after promise while we continue to suffer," he said.

After nearly two hours, Mlombile-Cingo convinced the villagers to reopen the R61 promising to bring a contractor with her to meet with them at around midday today.

Provincial public works spokesman Mphumzi Zuzile said the department had just appointed a maintenance contractor to work on some of the provincial roads in the PSJ area.