

Criminals threatening Laudium

Business owners say their lives and customers' in danger

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BUSINESS owners in the Laudium CBD at the weekend told officials from the Department of Community Safety that their lives and those of their customers were in danger.

They told the department's head of department, Yoliswa Makhasi, during an interaction in Laudium that they lived in constant fear and were threatened by criminals.

Makhasi was accompanied by anti-crime activist Yusuf Abramjee as well as representatives of the SAPS and civil society, who all embarked on a Thuma Mina Peace Walk as part of a Women's Month programme.

The walk started at the local police station, and proceeded to some of the crime hotspots identified by residents, including the Laudium CBD.

The walk was aimed at mobilising men to be activists in the fight against gender-based violence,

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About seven men are terrorising business owners and threatening customers while illegally guarding cars.

Businessman

address the scourge of crime and foster community police relations.

As Makhasi interacted with community members, a scuffle broke out nearby between one of the men accused of being a criminal and a business owner. The man hurled a volley of insults at the police when they tried to break off the fight.

The businessman then started speaking of problems they were faced with on a daily basis.

He said he has been running a shop at the CBD for almost 15 years, and said there were about

seven guys who were “terrorising” business owners.

He said he was often attacked for being vocal. “The guys are dealing in drugs and they threaten our customers. They are acting as illegal car guards... the list goes on.

“They are posing as car washers, but in the meantime they are scouting the area for easy targets and they also have electronic car signal jammers. On a daily basis they are stealing people's cars and it's the same guys,” he said.

He said he ended up installing

CCTV cameras outside his store just to monitor his customers to ensure their safety.

In response, Makhasi said they would consider deploying a safety kiosk in the area as part of reinforcing safety interventions in communities hard hit by criminals.

“We have a project that's coming through, where we will be deploying safety kiosks to some of the communities.

“It could be that we consider this as one of the spots where we will have a permanent safety kiosk

linked with the police patrols.”

Issues of unregistered liquor outlets and other legal registered outlets failing to abide by the law were also raised.

In a memorandum submitted to Makhasi by Abramjee, the community called for a speedy completion of Erasmia police station.

Abramjee said they also needed a new police station in Laudium. “We have raised the issue of the Erasmia police station; the building came to a halt over the past four years and we are calling on

National Public Works to speed up the construction of the police station.

“The Laudium police station is now in a poor state and we as residents want a new one, and we hope the head of department will take it to the ministry of police because we can't allow our police to work in these poor conditions,” he said.

Makhasi assured them she was noting all the problems they were faced with, and said there would be a collated response soon.



Laudium police station commander Lieutenant-Colonel Johan Britz, Gauteng Community Safety Department's Yoliswa Makhasi and Yusuf Abramjee during the Thuma Mina Peace Walk in Laudium at the weekend.

PICTURE: JACQUES NAUDE/AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)