

■ MUNICIPALITY

‘Clean up or clear out’

Ultimatum given to striking city workers

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IF THE cleaners under eThekwin Municipality’s Expanded Public Works Programme continue with their strike today, their contracts will be terminated.

Durban Solid Waste (DSW) said refuse collection had been disrupted since Tuesday.

The workers are demanding permanent employment at eThekwin Municipality.

Raymond Rampersad, head of DSW, said Durban Central, Jacobs, Bluff, Chatsworth and Newlands areas were affected by the strike, which started on Tuesday.

“If they continue with the strike tomorrow, we will terminate their contracts,” said Rampersad.

“Unfortunately, these are poor people who were taken from ward level to give them something to assist them.

“In my unit alone, I have 1 300 people under this programme, while there are 15 000 of them throughout the city in different departments.”

The employees under the programme earn a stipend of between R2 700 and R3 000 a month.

“Last night (Tuesday), the protesters deliberately overturned all roadside rubbish bins, and this is not good for the city because there are tourists every day,” Rampersad said.

“Whoever is stirring them is mis-



ETHEKWINI Municipality’s Expanded Public Works Programme cleaners went on a rampage on Tuesday overturning rubbish bins around the city. Refuse collection services were disrupted in Durban Central, Jacobs, Bluff, Newlands and Chatsworth. The employees are demanding permanent employment. | **MOTSHWARI MOFOKENG** African News Agency (ANA)

leading them and they are about to lose the little they have if they don’t come to their senses.

“Currently, we have 40 vacancies and they are shooting themselves in the foot by doing this because

the process of filling these posts cannot go ahead under this unrest,” he said.

Rampersad said his team was sent out last night with police escorts to clean the city.

Permanent employment is not guaranteed under the programme, but when opportunities arise in the different participating departments, a certain number can be employed permanently.

Speaking to the Daily News yesterday, the workers said they had worked under the programme since 2013.

Their spokesperson, Sfiso Mshengu, said they were promised permanent employment by mayor Zandile Gumede, and wanted the jobs.

“In June, the city employed 150 people and we were promised more would be employed. We have been waiting and our attempts to get the mayor’s attention are ignored.

“We will continue with the strike until we get an explanation,” Mshengu said.

Told of the possibility of their contracts being terminated if they continued with the strike, he said this was never conveyed to them, adding that they would “deal with it”.

Rampersad said the employees were misled as there was no agreement to employ them permanently.

Mthunzi Gumede, the mayor’s spokesperson, said the mayor condemned the disruption of services.

He called on city manager Sipho Nzuza to take action to ensure that services were restored to residents.