

■ WASTE

Mountains of rubbish piling up on streets

Refuse trucks not allowed to operate

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KWAZULU-NATAL'S two main cities, Durban and Pietermaritzburg, resembled dump sites this week as mountains of rubbish piled up on streets.

In Pietermaritzburg residents were left with three weeks of household rubbish because vehicles operated by Msunduzi Municipality were not allowed on the roads due to licensing problems.

Northdale ward councillor Rook-sana Ahmed said the municipal refuse removal trucks were not licensed. She said the municipality was also dealing with alleged fraudulent overtime submissions by workers. Spokesperson for the Msunduzi municipality, Ntobeko Ngcobo, said the rubbish was not collected "due to a staff-related matter which was addressed". Ngcobo urged residents to continue to put out their refuse on the usual collection days.

In Durban, about 800 workers from the Expanded Public Works Programme attached to Durban Solid Waste, downed tools and locked some of the gates to the depots, preventing trucks from leaving their stations.

In some neighbourhoods, residents removed their waste from the roadside to avoid animals breaking into the

bags and digging through the rubbish.

The uncollected rubbish issue reached areas as far as the North Coast.

Virona Govender said the stench in some roads was "terrible" and stray dogs were ripping open rubbish bags, leaving their contents strewn across the street.

She said the problem was compounding because some residents, in a desperate attempt to keep their area clean, were illegally dumping their rubbish bags on open fields and down embankments.

eThekweni mayor Zandile Gumede said she was dismayed by the illegal industrial action by the employees who trashed the inner city.

She said the Expanded Public Works Programme workers embarked on the strike, demanding immediate permanent employment from the city.

"As the leadership of this city we understand that the situation is difficult for everyone, including our employees, however this does not condone illegal action. The disruption of services and trashing of the city will not resolve problems."

Gumede said the strike has since come to a halt, with workers due to resume duties by yesterday afternoon to alleviate the waste removal backlog.