

Human Rights Commission asked to intervene for the sake of primary school learners

Magda Maritz
newsnigel.heraut@lantic.net

HEIDELBERG - The executive board of the Kaydale Residents Forum (KRF) has lodged a complaint with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) regarding Effort Primary School, due to the state's alleged non-compliance with the Constitution of South Africa.

According to the executive secretariat Phakiso Makhanye, KRF is seeking urgent intervention and investigation from the HRC, claiming that the Department of Education has failed the school miserably.

"The inadequate infrastructure at Effort Primary School undermines the right of learners in terms of Section 10 of the Constitution to have their dignity respected and protected. It is also in breach of Section 28(2) which provides that a child's interests and safety are of paramount importance. Government has a duty pursuant to Section 7(2) of the Constitution to promote and fulfil the right to basic education," Makhanye said.

Effort Primary School has reportedly been plagued with problems ranging from infrastructure collapse to a lack of textbooks and educational material. According to Makhanye, the soccer field and adjacent grass veld are not being maintained, as a result of which there is an increasing scourge of snake invasions in classrooms. He added that the school has no fire extinguishers to a ratio of at least one for every 150m², which ratio is increased to one every 50m² in laboratories and similar areas.

Other issues that were highlighted is the fact that the school does not have an assembly hall, library or media centre, and has inadequate sanitation (septic tank).

The fact that Effort Primary School has been battling electricity problems for over two years, also contributed to the lodging of a complaint with the HRC. Makhanye said the school is in desperate need of an upgrade and that the inadequate infrastructure undermines the learners' rights in terms of Section 10 of the Constitution, to have their dignity respected and protected.



Effort Primary School has reportedly been plagued with problems. The overgrown soccer field and adjacent grass veld are not being maintained, as a result of which there is an increasing scourge of snake invasions in classrooms.

Security remains one of the main concerns which KRF wants to be addressed without delay, as the school has no proper security fence or controlled access gate.

"The state has a duty to promote and fulfil the right to basic education and we furthermore demand a full disclosure of the school's budget for the past three years in order to determine whether there have been any irregularities or misconduct," Makhanye said.

In its complaint, KRF listed various state organs such as the Emfuleni District Department of Education, the Gauteng Department of Education, Department of Public Works, mayoral council of Lesedi Local Municipality, the Department of Human Settlements, the Department of water affairs and

sanitation as well as the Department of cooperative governance as the culprits responsible for violating the rights of learners.

"The situation at this school requires an investigation and/or audit on basic sanitation, water, electricity, school infrastructure and so forth. Once a report has been produced, the MEC for Education in Gauteng and relevant stakeholders must come up with a detailed plan to transform and/or improve the situation. This means that the report and plans must be made public and regular reporting must be ascertained and should be used as tools for transparency and accountability," Makhanye concluded.

A follow-up report will be published as soon as the HRC conducted and finalised its investigation.