

Kwelera desperate for police station

Community appeals to authorities to intervene as criminals run rampant

MBALI TANANA

mbalit@dispatch.co.za

The Kwelera community is up in arms because they are still waiting for a police station to be built and therefore cannot access important services.

The community, who have been clamouring for a new police station for a decade, still have to travel to East London to certify, write out affidavits and report crimes.

The community says the Blue

Water police station is the closest police station, which is situated more than 20km from the nearest village.

Mpumelelo Xakuvana, 56, from Jongilanga village said the area had a high incidence of rape, stock theft and other crimes.

“It was in 2008 on November 14 when a feasibility study was approved by the provincial police and we were even graced with a visit from the national office in 2017 when Fikile Mbalula, who was the police minister at the time, came to our community and repeated the promise of a police station,

but we have heard nothing since,” Xakuvana said.

“How much longer do we have to wait before we get a police station?” he asked.

Bulelwa Moyikwa, 51, from Nokhala village said crimes of rape and theft had increased

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Bulelwa Moyikwa

A resident of Nokhala village in Kwelera

because criminals knew there were no police in the area.

“We are living under terrible conditions with people doing as they please, because they know it'll take a while for police to arrive at a crime scene, that's if they do even come.

“We are elderly people living in these villages. We don't have the strength to fight off criminals. Our cattle, which are our only livelihood, are constantly being targeted,” she said.

Sindile Gqamlana, 47, of Gwaba village said they wanted their case to be treated with the urgency it deserved.

“Even police officers who are

employed at Blue Water police station are afraid to be there, because that station is in complete isolation and they are constantly applying for transfers, trying to relocate.”

Last year the Daily Dispatch reported that theft in Zozo location in Kwelera had reached a crisis point.

In one month, five farmers were hit by stock theft in the early hours of the morning.

Farmer Xolani Haya, who owns close to 150 livestock, said it hurt to see three of his cows lying butchered near a rural dip tank, with one cow severely wounded with its tail cut off.

“This is the second time I have experienced this. In 2015, I was a victim,” he told the Dispatch.

Provincial police spokesman Captain Khaya Tonjeni said: “We would like to thank the community of Blue Water Bay/Kwelerha for engaging the provincial police when there is a matter affecting policing and service delivery, instead of resorting to other means.

“The concerns of the community have been noted and a feasibility study was conducted in 2018. The documentation on the feasibility study was forwarded to the national office.

“It is also important to note

that various communities have developed over time and there is an ever-increasing need for policing services.”

SAPS was looking at more “cost-effective measures” for stations such as parkhomes and mobile police units. These are some of the plans and alternative to address the challenges,” he said.

Mortar and brick construction of stations was the responsibility of the department of public works.

He said SAPS supply chain management had forwarded relevant documentation to the department.