

FEUD OVER WORST CLINIC IN SA

Fight over location of health facility has been ongoing since 2004

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The construction of a replacement for the worst clinic in South Africa has stalled for 15 years because of a bitter feud between two royal families in the Eastern Cape.

Cwele Clinic in Ngqeleni was supposed to have been built in 2004, but could not get off the ground because two traditional leaders – a chief and head-woman – and their subjects have been fighting about where it should be built.

Emchwebeni Tradition Council head Nkosi Zamdola Gcinintlanga Ndamase has been accused of blocking construction of the clinic, with claims that he wanted it built in Cwele Junction, which is closer to his village of Ezinduneni.

This is despite the late head-woman Nkosikazi Nobonke Zanokhanyo Ndamase, AmaMpondo aseNyandeni King Ndamase Ndamase and some villages having agreed the clinic should be built in Tinarha. This was because Tinarha is a neutral location for the three villages that would benefit from the improved health services – Cwele, Lusizini and Maqebevu (also known as Zinyosini) villages.

Zamdola and his supporters have denied he blocked development, saying the community had resolved it should be built in Cwele Junction.

The clinic would bring much-needed primary healthcare services to the area as the current one – a mud rondavel – was named as the worst in the country in 2016 by the health department.

In 2017, the provincial health department said construction of the clinic, nurses’ residence and gate house would go ahead in Tinarha but this never got off the ground.

Now the public works provincial spokesperson Vuyokazi

Mbanjwa has said contractors are expected to be on site in July in Tinarha.

Proposals calling for contractors to bid for the tender closed on March 28.

“According to the letter from the Kingdom of Western Mpondoland, the Tinarha site has

been agreed upon. The project period is 20 months,” Mbanjwa said on Tuesday.

In 2017, Bhisho set aside R20m for the construction of the clinic.

Asked how much would be spent on it now, Mbanjwa said: “The project has just closed for

tender, awaiting all other supply chain processes.”

King Ndamase’s spokesperson, Nkosi Jongusapho Bokleni,

said the king and his council had instructed Zamdola not to interfere with the process as villagers had decided on Tinarha as the location for the

clinic. “Nkosikazi Nobonke died a heartbroken woman because of the delays in building the clinic.”

Bokleni said despite resistance and defiance by Zamdola, the clinic would be built in Tinarha.

“We have made it clear to him.

However, Nkosi Zamdola is apparently becoming a bit defiant. But he is aware of the consequences of defying a monarch and creating anarchy among the people one leads. I can just say we are watching him,” Bokleni said.

Zamdola said he had stuck to

process in identifying the clinic’s location. He confirmed the fight over the location of the clinic had begun in 2004.

“The king is my king. I respect him, but when he is wrong I must correct him. Correcting him does not mean I disrespect him. But I believe that he has

been misled by the four young men who are tenderpreneurs and are in Maqebevu.

“They say they are leaders of a certain development forum, which I am not even aware of and was never introduced to me.

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