

Police members living in slum-like conditions

WITBANK - The barracks at Witbank Police Station are in a worse state than the jail cells, yet the Mpumalanga government expects the women and men in blue to take pride in their work and do it professionally.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) conducted oversight inspections at Vosman and Witbank police stations and was shocked by the dire condition of the living quarters of police officers at these stations. They're living with their families in blocks of flats that are overcrowded and dilapidated with broken windows and stairs.

The police station itself is under-staffed, under-equipped, and under-resourced. More than five years ago, one of the blocks of flats at Witbank police station burned down. To this day, nothing was done to fix it. This has led to the overcrowding in some of the other barracks.

When appointed, former national police commissioner, Rhiya Phiyega spoke about the grave despair and slum-like conditions of many barracks across the country. She

declared that under her tenure, the repair of police living quarters would be a priority. But nothing was done.

Creating better living conditions for our police officers is essential to improving their morale and to effectively fight crime. While our country is experiencing unprecedented levels of crime, police officers put their lives on the line and they deserve healthy and dignified working and living environments.

"I will report the condition of the barracks at Witbank police station to the department of public works as well as the department of safety and security and request a progress report," said Jane Sithole, DA Mpumalanga Provincial Leader.

Witbank police barracks need urgent attention. The DA strongly believes that the South African Police Service (SAPS) must be professionalised. This will require restoring the dignity of the officers living in these conditions. *(Media statement by Jane Sithole, DA Mpumalanga Provincial Leader)*
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Jane Sithole inspecting the slum-like conditions of the barracks at Witbank and Vosman police stations, where members of the police and their families must reside. Nothing came of the promises made by Rhiya Phiyega, former national police commissioner, that the living conditions in police quarters would be uplifted and prioritised.