

OUTCRY AS CRIME SOARS

Eight years and still no police station for Makhaza

SIYABONGA KALIPA
siyabonga.kalipa@inl.co.za

RESIDENTS in two communities are no closer to getting state-of-the-art police precincts apromised nearly a decade ago.

In 2013, Makhaza was promised its own station, while Muizenberg was set to be revamped as a cost of over R107 million.

There was a massive outcry slamming authorities for the money to be spent at Muizenberg that presented less crime than areas like Makhaza in Khayelitsha.

Yesterday, Police Minister Bheki Cele announced the fourth quarter crime stats where Khayelitsha came up as the province's murder capital. In the list of the top 30 police stations for murder, Khayelitsha was fourth nationally, with 61 murders compared to 52 from the same period last year.

Khayelitsha Development Forum chairperson Ndithini Tyhido said it was disappointing that the lack of police services in Makhaza, which is in Khayelitsha, had taken this long.

He said the three police stations in Khayelitsha are not coping with the number of communities they have to service.

"Khayelitsha is growing drastically and there are 13 new communities which add more burden to the few stations," he said.

Tyhido said since his tenure as chairperson, they have dealt with about five different police ministers trying to resolve the issue but nothing has been done.

According to residents and leaders of Khayelitsha, crime has increased in Makhaza because the area has no police station. They said they were promised a police station of their own and a site was identified but it is still empty.

The greater community of Khayelitsha, one of the biggest townships in Cape Town and still growing, is being serviced by three police stations.

A Makhaza resident, Akhona Matolengwe, said they have been promised a police station since she was a little girl.

She said crime had increased in the area because criminals know the nearest police station is far. For someone to report a crime they have to go to either Harare or Lingelethu police stations and it is "quite a distance".

She said it was not surprising the government was not doing anything about it. Because they never did anything people were tired of empty promises.

Ward 96 councillor Danile Khatshwa said crime was "way too high" and police numbers were insufficient because Khayelitsha was overpopulated.

He said Harare was supposed to service that community and surrounding areas but because there are not enough stations it services other areas as well.

Khatshwa said the police station was



A WALL with hopeful words at the place where a police station was supposed to be built. | BRENDAN MAGAAR African News Agency (ANA)

promised in 2013 and additional police services should have been added a long time ago for Khayelitsha.

In 2018, Social Justice Coalition (SJC), a human rights organisation, built a wall on the site where the station was meant to be built and wrote on it "Makhaza police station".

SJC's Sibusiso Mdlankomo said it had been "years the community has been waiting for the station".

He said they have been engaging with the community and people are not happy.

"We have noticed that vigilantism have increased because people live in fear and decided to take the law into their own hands," said Mdlankomo.

He added that they would fight alongside the community "so at least by the end of the year the construction begins".

Police spokesperson Brigadier Novela Potelwa said Makhaza police station was on their priority list for the construction of new buildings.

National Department of Public Works and Infrastructure spokesperson Thami Mchunu said there was land identified after investigations by their department and SAPS, and construction would begin after regulatory compliance matters such as site clearance had been finalised and SAPS provided a budget for construction.

He said the process of site clearance, which entails an investigation into the feasibility of the site to accommodate the facility, confirming ownership and vesting the property if still needed, establishing zoning and land-use requirements of the municipality and environmental impact analysis studies, may take up to 18 months or longer.

"At the moment the cost of the new facility is still undetermined since the project is not yet at design stage, the cost of construction can be closely estimated only after designs and all other anticipated costs have been finalised," he said.

The renovation of Muizenberg station caused a furore about four years ago

when the budget was said to be R107 409 407.

Then Police Minister Fikile Mbalula and some civil organisations deemed the amount of the upgrade unjustified.

Potelwa said there was currently no planned upgrade for Muizenberg police station.

Mchunu said at the request of SAPS the project for repairs and upgrading of the station was deactivated.

"The amount was never allocated to the project, funds are only allocated to projects for construction once the cost of development is established, and also funds are not allocated at once but over a period of financial years in a staggered manner in line with anticipated progress on construction over a financial year or period," Mchunu said.

Muizenberg police station is about 6km from communities such as Vrygrond and Capricorn that are in dire need of its services, compared to areas including Kalk Bay, Muizenberg, St James and Marina da Gama.

Muizenbrg CPF chairperson Frank Bokhorst said the community rejected the proposal because they felt the money can be used where it is needed the most.

"The upgrade wouldn't have helped."

