

'They promised us houses, but we're still suffering'

By ZIMBILI VILAKAZI

MKMVA members who have been sleeping on the side of the road since the start of the month have given political leaders three days to address them.

On Sunday, 20 June, the protesters who camped out in South Beach, Durban, said they wanted to meet Public Works MEC Jomo Sibiya, Premier Sihle Zikalala and eThekweni Mayor Mxolisi Kaunda.

They had been sleeping on the street since they were evicted from the Palm Beach Hotel, a building owned by the public works department, on 28 May.

Officials obtained an order from the Durban High Court to carry out the eviction.

Skhumbuzo Jili (48), one of the veterans, said they invaded the building because they had nowhere to live.

"Various ANC officials have promised us decent houses and jobs over the years but nothing has happened. We decided to make use of a building that had been abandoned for several years," he said.

"We don't have money. We're not working.

"For the past 27 years, we've been sleeping in the kitchens of our parents' houses."

Sandile Ngwenya, another MKMVA mem-



ber, said they wanted the three officials to tell them why they hadn't kept their promises.

"They promised us houses and jobs when they got into their positions," he said.

The protesters said if they were not addressed by Wednesday, 23 June, they would find a way to get back into the hotel.

"Once we are inside, they will have to kill us before they throw us out again," said Jili.

MEC Sibiya said he would meet Human

Settlements Minister Lindiwe Sisulu on Friday to discuss the roll-out of housing to veterans.

"Regarding the illegal occupation of the building, we would be irresponsible if we allowed any member of society to occupy a building which is unsafe, has no running water and no electricity," he said.

"My office has been in touch with MKMVA convener Zibuse Cele to try and set up a meeting to find a long-lasting solution."