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Old buildings a health hazard

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AN OCCUPANT of an abandoned dilapidated government building in eThekweni Municipality was adamant that they are not living in the Seamen's building, in Point, illegally.

Asking to remain anonymous, the occupant claimed that he had been living in the building for more than 10 years.

He claimed that he did not pay rent because they were given permission to live in the building by its previous owner. The building is owned by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Human Settlements and Public Works.

The man explained that they did have a supply of electricity and water. "We try our best to keep the building in pristine condition, but sometimes it experiences water leaks.

"We would appreciate it if the government can move us into proper, much safer places to live," he said.



THE SEAMEN'S building, one of the old, dilapidated government buildings that was used by seamen until the end of the century, is one of the city's eyesores. | Supplied

Human Settlements and Public Works MEC Siphon Nkosi and officials from eThekweni conducted an in loco inspection of two buildings

yesterday. Some hijacked government and municipal-owned buildings have become an eyesore within the Durban Central Business District (CBD).

Nkosi said that his department strongly condemned the unlawful occupation of government buildings as some posed a serious health hazard.

In two of the buildings visited, there were people living in them.

Nkosi also wanted to avoid a repeat of what happened in Johannesburg when an illegally-occupied building went up in flames, killing 77 people in the process.

Nkosi said that his department aimed at prioritising the issue of these illegally-occupied buildings, some of which have become a haven for criminals and illegal activities.

Nkosi said that his department had five dilapidated and abandoned buildings within the Durban CBD, two of which were illegally occupied.

Nkosi said the department would decide whether these buildings will be sold or leased, and another announcement on whether the occupants of the buildings will be moved to safer accommodation.

eThekweni deputy mayor Councillor Zandile Myeni said that the municipality was determined to get rid of the old, dilapidated buildings that have become an eyesore, and therefore "eradicate" the illegal activities that happen in them.

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