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A man outside the cemetery.

# Damaged tombstones, long grass at Sosh cemetery

» Itumeleng Mokoena

The Soshanguve Block P cemetery is now a mere shadow of what it used to be and has become a crime hotspot, according to residents.

The cemetery is dilapidated, with no maintenance done anymore.

Long grass and tall trees are now used by criminals as a cover to rob unsuspecting victims visiting their loved ones' graves.

Residents said that vandalism is the order of the day and that the Tshwane metro has turned a blind eye to this.

Resident Refiloe Tampane said nothing was being done about the safety of visitors.

"Women must be accompanied by men because it's no longer safe to go there on our own," she said.

Tampane said the cemetery no longer has a fence.

"All the palisades surrounding the graveyard have been removed or stolen. There's nothing left; the cemetery has no gate anymore, and the tombstones are vandalised."

The lack of fencing at the facility has enabled people around the area to pass through the site as a shortcut.

Tampane said there was no longer any regard for the dead, and it was unfortunate.

"Our loved ones deserve to rest in peace and dignity," she concluded.

The metro has confirmed that they are following up on the situation.



The cemetery is dilapidated, with no maintenance done anymore.

"The City is aware of all issues at the cemetery, and some of them will be attended to in the current financial year once resources are allocated," said metro spokesperson Lindela Mashigo.

Mashigo said the challenge at the cemetery is vandalism of infrastructure by some members of the community.

The budget allocated to the cemetery is for grass cutting, and the last time grass was cut was in June.

Mashigo said the metro will uphold its responsibility to ensure safe and clean graveyard facilities.

The metro is currently waiting for a new intake of EPWP workers that

will assist in the operational plan.

"At Block P cemetery, we had members of the community assist with cleaning; however, their contract came to an end, and after this new intake, cleaning programmes will commence."

The grass cutting at all city cemeteries is in phases within a financial year.

"Block P cemetery had a grass-cutting session in June, but regarding the trimming of trees, the Regional Urban Forestry has only planned for it around August.

The TMPD is currently busy with the risk assessment to address crime at the cemetery.