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Illegally occupied houses become an eyesore



Sekhukhune firefighters at the entrance of head office in Groblersdal.

Sekhukhune firefighters close district office

Dan Mdluli

Firefighters from Elias Motsoaledi, Ephraim Mogale, Fetakgomo-Tubatse and Makhuduthamaga Municipalities closed the entrance to Sekhukhune District Municipality in Groblersdal last Tuesday until Friday.

The angry firefighters, who are under the municipality's Expanded Public Works Programme, embarked on the protest action after they were not paid in July and August.

They converged at the offices to register their grievances following their frustrations over not being able to pay rent, buy groceries or afford transport to get to work.

Neo Mothupi, one of the firefighters stationed in Elias Motsoaledi Local Municipality, indicated that the municipality's failure to provide answers on the nonpayment fueled the action to close the gates of the institution.

Mr Mothupi said they were forced to avail themselves for work while they had no money, a situation that propelled them to embark on the strike. "We decided to take action because all the officials have

their monthly salaries while we suffer. We owe people money. We took loans with the hope that we would get paid as promised. The management does not even bother to meet us and explain the reasons behind the problem. We are tired of being taken for granted. As firefighters, we work hard to ensure the safety of communities, but that is not acknowledged."

Another firefighter, from the Ephraim Mogale Fire Brigade, who requested to remain anonymous, said when they were not paid at the end of July, they were promised to get all the money owed to them at the end of August and were surprised when that did not happen. "We work hard and make sure that we come to work every day, but that is not seen by the management of the municipality. This is disheartening for all the firefighters in the region. It cannot be allowed to continue this way."

Attempts to get a comment from the Sekhukhune District Municipality were not successful at the time of print.

*The *Daller Express* reliably learnt that the workers were all paid last Friday following the protest action.



Sekhukhune District Municipality firefighters barricaded the entrance.

Sekhukhune District Municipality offices.