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Villagers demand road infrastructure

UWIWE JARA

Ambulances, undertakers unable to reach Mthingwevu residents

Residents of Mthingwevu village between Cala and Cofimvaba marched to the department of public works and infrastructure premises in Komani, demanding an end to their dilapidated roads which halt service delivery to the area.

These residents claim that the families of deceased people are struggling to bury their loved ones as there are no roads.

The village has one part belonging to Sakhisizwe Local Municipality and another to Intsika Yethu Local Municipality.

Community dialogue organiser Zweli Nkomana said they were marching because of the state of the main road connecting Cofimvaba and Cala.

Nkomana said they have a bridge but it was damaged during the floods early this year.

"Only small cars can cross that bridge now, not even a 2-tonne truck manages to cross it. In December 2022, five people got swept away by the water and died. Mthingwevu residents cannot access any town even when it's drizzling," he said.

When someone is sick, the ambulance cannot reach that



DEMANDING ATTENTION: Anele Ncumbese addresses Mthingwevu villagers who held a protest outside the department of public works and infrastructure premises for a better road connecting Cala and Cofimvaba. **Picture: UWIWE JARA**

person nor the undertakers when a person has died.

"We have been writing to the department of roads asking them to assist us with that road but our cry fell on deaf ears.

"Residents are furious and frustrated by the government.

"We are not asking for a tar

road, we would appreciate even a gravel road," Nkomana said.

He said they have been writing letters to the department and keep receiving acknowledgement that they have received the letters.

"There is an RDP houses project currently underway in

Mthingwevu with a mandate to build 300 units in phase one.

The project stopped in December because suppliers cannot get into the village or cross the bridges," he said.

Community dialogue founder Anele Ncumbese said due to dilapidated state of roads,

it was hard to take dead bodies to the morgue.

"In a meeting, an elderly woman told us a story that one of the dead bodies had maggots and a helicopter had to be used to transport it to the morgue."

"They had to hang the body outside the helicopter because

of the bad stench from the deceased," he said.

Ncumbese said: "A decision to come here was taken by the community after a meeting that was supposed to be between them and government officials who did not pitch up to that meeting."

He said he had to live his car in town because of the bad state of their road.

"I was also contacted by the contractor who was building RDP houses who told me that I had to stop building because the suppliers cannot reach the village," he said.

"We had a meeting with the staff members where they told us that the department does not have money. We gave them a list of the roads that need to be redone and we made it clear that we are expecting them to answer if they can at least scrape our roads," Ncumbese said.

After their meeting with the department of transport, they went to Intsika Yethu Local Municipality, where they were told to expect a response to their cry in three days.

Another resident said another person died on Sunday around 4pm and when they left the village on Monday, the body was still there.