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Title: Villagers demand speed humps after girl, 7, killed in hit-and-run

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A pall of smoke from burning tyres hovered over Gogozayo village on Monday as angry residents blocked a paved road leading to Upper Ngqungqu Senior Primary, demanding speed humps on the two provincial roads cutting through the village.

Gogozayo is less than 7km from Mqanduli, and the R411 between Mqanduli and Coffee Bay cuts through it.

Another 22km tarred road connecting Mqanduli and Elliotdale runs just 100 metres from the school.

Last week, a seven-year-old girl was hit by a car outside the school and died.

On Monday, teachers and hundreds of pupils sat outside while a group of protesters sang politically charged songs beside the road.

Community leader Anele Sikele, a former ward committee member, said they had been fighting in vain since 2014 to get the government to build speed humps on the road outside the school.

In the past 15 years, up to seven children had been killed in hit-and-run accidents while crossing the road, along with

some villagers.

"The last straw was when a seven-year-old grade 1 girl was hit by a car last Wednesday," Sikele said.

"The motorist simply drove off, but fortunately another motorist chased the car.

"Its driver alighted and tried to run away, but we heard the person had been arrested."

The injured child was rushed to the Mqanduli Clinic by school staff, but died later the same day.

Sikele said this had sparked a wave of anger among Gogozayo residents, leading to the protest.

He said they had written to KSD municipal bosses and the department of public works pleading for speed humps.

In 2019, they had written to the provincial education department's portfolio committee but there had been no response.

Instead, an NGO had been sent to teach children about road safety.

In December 2022, another child was hit by a speeding car and ended up paralysed, while in July a villager died in a hit-and-run incident.

Upper Ngqungqu SGB chair Siyabonga Dyonase said: "You

cannot expect young children to master road safety tips.

"They are bound to forget.

"When we send our children to school, it is for them to be educated so they can have a better future, not to be run over by speeding cars."

On Monday, the protesters vowed to continue their action until their demands were met.

Some were overheard saying they might even dig up the tar road "and make our own speed humps", while others vowed the children would not write any year-end exams if speed humps had not been built.

But KSD municipal ward 23 councillor Bambela Vuma told the protesters the municipality was aware of the issue.

"It is in the Integrated Development Plan," he said.

"We have also written to the department of transport about the issue."

But there was at present no budget for speed humps.

All the department could do for now was put up warning signs and ensure traffic officers were more visible on the two routes.

This infuriated the protesters further, and they warned things could get violent if the issue was not urgently addressed.

