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# MASPALA LEAVES HAWKERS STRANDED!

Hawkers were left stranded after they were given two days to remove their stalls. Photo by Thembi Siaga

By **THEMBI SIAGA**

**THE** ongoing repair of the D4 road in Elim, Limpopo, has dealt a severe blow to more than 50 hawkers who depended on their stalls for their livelihoods.

Given just two days' notice to vacate the area, these hawkers now don't have a place to run their businesses.

On Monday, 9 October, the hawkers selling along the road for more than two decades were instructed to remove their stalls.

The multimillion-rand road project, connecting N1 to Elim and passing through Malamulele to Vuwani, started on 23 July under the supervision of the contractor Machabatau Construction.

While they understand the necessity of the rehabilitation process, the hawkers blame the Makhado Municipality for not providing them with sufficient advance notice.

Gogo Sarah Mukwebo (80) told *Daily Sun* that she doesn't know how she'll continue to support her three orphaned grandkids with the insufficient Sassa grant money alone.

"I rely on my sales to make ends meet, and now I'm stuck with unsold stock. What's worse is that they haven't offered us any temporary selling locations, and we're enduring great hardships," she said.

Julia Madavha, the leader of the Elim Market, said it had affected all of them, as many of them re-

cently bought stock including crates of tomatoes, bananas, and avocados.

"Now we're uncertain where to go to make a living to support our families," she said.

John Ntabeni, the senior headman of the Njakanjaka traditional council, said they tried to encourage some hawkers to temporarily move to the road leading to Louis Trichardt.

"But they refused, as there are no customers to support them," he said.

The hawkers also said that they pay an annual fee of R500 each to the tribal authority to renew their licences and R285 to the municipality.

*Daily Sun* obtained documents indicating that the hawkers pay this yearly fee to the Makhado Municipality.

But municipal spokesman Louis Bobodi said that they're not aware of the hawkers paying the alleged fee.

Witness Tiva, the spokesman for Public Works, Roads, and Infrastructure, denied the hawkers' allegations and said that the community held a meeting at Njakanjaka Tribal Authority, during which community members were made aware of the project.

"When the contractor approached the four-way stop, a meeting was held with the hawkers, informing them that the contractor was approaching the area, and the hawkers agreed to two days' notice," he said.