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HERITAGE

Robben Island Museum denies site is falling apart

STAFF REPORTER

THE Robben Island Museum has denied allegations of infrastructure collapse, saying the island is fit for visitors.

This follows the circulation of photographs on social media showing some buildings in a state of decay.

CEO Abigail Thulare said that the upkeep and maintenance of the Robben Island Museum (RIM) as a world heritage site and a marine protected area was managed by the museum, the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, as well as the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

"The narrative perpetuated by certain stakeholders that the RIM is in a state of disrepair is completely devoid of truth and would appear to have malicious intent," the museum said.

"The photographs (circulating on social media), which show certain buildings with the roof collapsed, were taken four years ago during site inspections with the contractor to assess the damage and plan for the repairs.

"The attached photographs (administration block, village, prison) clearly show the upgraded infrastructure as it currently looks."

Two years ago, DA MEC Reagen Allen visited the island, raising concern about the alleged deterioration of the facility.

He said the signs of decay included peeling paint, areas overgrown with weeds, and buildings in need of repair.

Thulare said: "We wish to categorically deny any allegations of infrastructure collapse and assure the public that the island is fit and has been welcoming visitors to its shores, with the highest visitor numbers experienced during the December peak season, post Covid-19."

The museum said the economic recovery plan in the wake of Covid-19 needed to be seen in the context of "large-scale revenue losses over the last two years, and as such, maintenance



CONCERNS have been raised on social media about the alleged decaying and neglect of facilities at the Robben Island Museum. | LUKE AKAL

is prioritised for the core infrastructure in the spaces that are covered during the various tour options".

"Our recovery plans are well under way, with a focus not only on improved products and services but also improving the customer experience at every touch point.

"It is unfortunate that not all stakeholders are necessarily allies and will seek to undermine the work that so many dedicated and committed employees are doing," said Thulare.