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Informal settlement; calls for action

The DA in Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality says its numerous attempts to get the municipality to act on the issue of the illegal informal settlement in Marble Hall, Koteng, have fallen on deaf ears.

Koteng settlement, on the land abandoned by the Department of Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure, started in 2016 with about 10 shacks. The numbers ballooned during the Covid-19 pandemic, shooting up to 1 000 structures in 2021.

Mr Flip Jacobs, a DA councillor in Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality, says that this kind of

illegal land grab has become a crisis, placing a number of financial and logistical burdens on the municipality, and the unlawful occupation of land at Koteng also leads to severe dysfunctionality in Marble Hall, including the obstruction of sewerage infrastructure and a lack of access for upgrading and maintenance.

“There has been the pollution of waterways and an increased safety hazard due to illegal electricity connections. The town is now experiencing a loss of investment and property value for owners. Crime has escalated beyond belief. The safety of the community is at risk. The shortage of amenities like clinics, schools and community

centres close to invaded lands places immense pressure on a municipality and the surrounding communities,” says Mr Jacobs. He elaborated that illegal land invasions frequently result in violations of planning and environmental legislation, including the sub-division of the Agricultural Act, Spatial Land Use Management Act, Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act and many local by-laws.

“To avert these challenges,

the Prevention of Illegal Eviction from an Unlawful Occupation of Land Amendment Bill was

introduced by the DA in the National Assembly on March 24. The proposed amendments aim to change the original Act to address the endemic of unlawful land occupation across South Africa,” said Mr Jacobs.

Speaking to the *Daller Express*, Percy Moagi, Ephraim Mogale Local Municipality’s Communications Manager, said that the council previously took a resolution to relocate the people from the settlement.

Mr Moagi added that the municipality is still in the process of identifying land where people can be relocated to. People continue to flock to the land, and the erection of mud and corrugated iron structures remains the order of the day.

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A portion of the mushrooming unlawful Koteng settlement.