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All hands were on deck during an intensive clean-up operation at the illegal dumping site in Waterdal. Photo: Moleboheng Chaha

'Phakama Vaal' clean-up operation kick starts

Moleboheng Chaha

A major joint clean-up campaign dubbed 'Phakama Vaal' kicked off at various illegal dumping hotspots in the Sedibeng District last week.

The initiative led by Gauteng MEC for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) Jacob Mamabolo and the Executive Mayor of Emfuleni Local Municipality (ELM) Sipho Radebe is part of the Executive Mayor's "Clean My City" campaign, which aims to restore dignity, health, and pride to communities.

For the past few years, the Vaal

Triangle has been riddled with mushrooming illegal dumping sites as a result of a lack of household refuse collection by ELM.

Previously, DA Shadow MMC for Public Works Dady Mollo, raised concerns about the suffering residents had to endure due to a lack of services.

"Residents continue to endure unsanitary conditions, with waste accumulating in the streets. This is a clear failure by the municipality to provide basic services to its people. The people of Emfuleni deserve better, they deserve a clean, healthy, and safe environment."

Mollo demanded immediate action from the municipality to restore waste collection services across all areas.

In a statement, ELM said the eight-day intensive operation is already showing visible and meaningful results.

"Over the past two days, we have seen substantial progress across multiple wards, with streets being cleared, illegal dumping sites removed, and public spaces revived.

Even more heartening has been the overwhelmingly positive feedback from residents, who are not only welcoming the clean-up but are starting to take ownership

of their environment."

The ELM called on community members to play their part in keeping the environment clean.

"We cannot clean the same spaces repeatedly if we don't change our habits. Illegal dumping is not just an eyesore, it is a threat to our health, our safety, and the future of our children."

In response to these utterances by ELM, residents said that the initiative would only be effective if the municipality also worked hard to ensure the consistent collection of household refuse, stating that if this does not happen, illegal dumping would be a continued crisis in ELM.