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**Title:** DA demands investigation into Tompi Seleka EPWP workers' contracts

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## DA demands investigation into Tompi Seleka EPWP workers' contracts



The Democratic Alliance in Limpopo is calling for an investigation into contracts of Tompi Seleka Agricultural College EPWP workers.

**PHETWANE** - The Democratic Alliance (DA) in Limpopo seeks the departments of Agriculture and Rural Development and Public Works, Roads and Infrastructure to investigate complaints by Extended Public Works Programme workers attached to Tompi Seleka Agricultural College concerning the alleged coercion of the workers into accepting altered contract terms.

According to Marie Helm, DA Provincial spokesperson for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the party has received reports from EPWP workers contracted through the department to the college.

Helm said that the workers claim that they signed contracts for the period 25 February to 25 March at a daily rate of R250 – amounting to about R5 500 for 22 working days. However, Helm said multiple affidavits indicate that after work had commenced, the workers were pressured to sign a second contract.

"Under this new agreement, they would be paid R250 per day only until 13 March, and then, R140 per day from 14 to 25 March. Workers were told they would not be paid unless they signed the revised contract- a

move they rightly refused," explained Helm.

She confirmed that the DA has seen a letter signed by the Director: Training Services at the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development which proposed that the workers be remunerated at R140 per day for 21 days and be offered an extension of 17 working days – at the same R140 rate to 'compensate' for the R110 per day shortfall from the original agreement.

Helm said altering of the contract after it has been signed and implemented appears irregular and unlawful.

"Threatening to withhold payment unless workers sign a second and less favourable contract may amount to coercion and violation of basic labour rights – and is more heinous when targeting the most vulnerable in the society," stated Helm.

She added, "If the department budgeted for R250 per day but only R140 per day was paid, then where did the remainder go? At best, the saga reflects gross mismanagement and unethical treatment of vulnerable workers. At worst, it points to potential fraud or corruption involving public funds."