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■ CRIME

Find someone else, we can't do it, say Bergville SAPS

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TOP cop Lieutenant-General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi and his band of sleuths are being relied upon to bring to book a gang of robbers, believed to be members of the construction mafia, who pounced on workers at a construction in northern KwaZulu-Natal and stole diesel.

The incident, which occurred in a remote part of Bergville, was a rarity for the local branch of the SAPS.

It has been alleged that a six-member construction mafia group allegedly held construction workers hostage at gunpoint, and seized 300 liters of diesel at the roadworks, which is located within the Okhahlamba Local Municipality, on Monday.

MEC for Transport and Human Settlements Siboniso Duma said that he was confident that the KZN Police Commissioner (Mkhwanazi) and his team will apprehend the alleged criminals.

"The robbery is the first of its kind at the Bergville Police Station. We salute Inkosi Njabulo Miya of the Emazizini Traditional Council, the izinduna, and the whole community for their public display of anger and opposition towards these criminals who are trying to derail the project.

"We are encouraging anyone with information about this robbery to contact the nearest police. There should be no place for construction mafia gangs in villages, townships, suburbs, or anywhere in KZN," Duma said.

He noted that the department had committed R177 million in the renovation of the primary route P304. This route provided as a vital link between Bergville and Maloti Drakensberg Park/Royal Natal Park via the R74.

He said that it was critical for developing rural businesses in impoverished places. Duma stated that the department's goal with the investment



A Brazen gang allegedly terrorised a construction site near Bergville, but the local police service says that are ill-equipped to handle the alleged crime. | File

was to guarantee that P304 remained safe and usable while also stimulating other areas of the economy, including agriculture and tourism.

In 2023, former Public Works Minister Sihle Zikalala said the disruption and blockages of construction sites by the construction mafia cost the econ-

omy more than R68 billion, before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, in 186 projects.

The South African Police Services (SAPS) was approached for comment, no response was received.

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