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EPWP workers brought the R59 to a standstill last week to protest unpaid wages and labour disputes. Insert: Traffic backed up along the R59 last week. Photo: Supplied. Photo: Christiaan Cloete

R59 road workers stop traffic amid labour dispute

Christiaan Cloete

MEYERTON – Workers on a road maintenance project along the R59 last week demanded clarity on their contracts, payments, and compensation following a recent accident that left one colleague dead and two hospitalised.

The workers, employed under the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) on a road maintenance project, briefly disrupted traffic between the Johan

Le Roux and Meyer Street off-ramps near Meyerton during a protest last Thursday, August 14.

They said the disruption was sparked by confusion over contracts and payment. “We have been working on this project for VEA (VEA Road Maintenance and Civils) for three years and have never met the client,” said Maphetsho Malia. “Our contracts were due to end in November, but we were told suddenly that they would be cut short. We don’t know when we will receive our

last salary or UIF payments.”

The incident that sparked the protest occurred when a motorist struck a group of seven workers. One died, two remain in the hospital, and the others were discharged. Jocelyn Veeris, who was injured in the accident, said: “Mediclinic is calling for money, but I have since learned that I have not been registered with the Labour Department for compensation.”

Workers say they attempted to get answers from VEA and relevant departments

but received little clarity. “We do road management. We even die on the site,” Malia added.

Efforts to contact VEA for comment were unsuccessful at the time of publication. Police and law enforcement were present during the protest to monitor the situation.

The workers continue to seek answers about contract terms, UIF contributions, and medical compensation, calling for urgent intervention from both the project managers and the relevant authorities.