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CITY'S GRAND EVICTION PLAN STALLED

Tent City application not yet submitted

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RESIDENTS are holding the City to account for its promise to submit an eviction order for foreign nationals occupying the Wingfield and Paint City tents in Ysterplaat and Bellville, despite no application lodged a week after the City's grand announcement.

The City and national government last week said they were jointly seeking a High Court eviction order for the foreign nationals occupying the sites – a move criticised by housing rights activists Ndifuna Ukwazi.

Ward 56 councillor in Kensington, Cheslyn Steenberg, said they were awaiting the eviction.

"I want to inform residents that contrary to recent statements made by the mayor, and the minister of Home Affairs and minister of Public Works, we have not received a draft copy of the eviction order made to the Western Cape High Court regarding the Wingfield refugee tent occupants. To date, no legal action has been taken.

"You may recall my message to the residents on June 19 regarding the videos where the mayor and ministers of Home Affairs and Public Works made a commitment on June 18 to the community that they were going to submit an application for eviction of the refugees that day.

"On June 23 I checked online, and there was no submission of the eviction order as promised."

The City, in response to Steenberg's remarks, said it had yet to submit the application.

"The City and national government are seeking a court order to serve

eviction notices, which, once granted, will lead to a final eviction order. The application is ready for submission soon and is currently being circulated for signature."

Kensington Factreton Residents and Ratepayers Association (KFRRA) member, Leslie Swartz, said they have yet to see the commitment come to fore.

"During a recent meeting with the mayor, Geordin Hill-Lewis, he announced that with the support of the minister of Home Affairs and the minister of Public Works, an application for eviction has been made. We welcomed the announcement but will not be holding our breath as the mayor and the minister of Home Affairs are both on record having stated the same process some months ago and nothing has changed.

"Our community had absolutely no say in this relocation matter as the rights of all citizens are suspended during a disaster.

"The white tent has deteriorated into a state of decay with several structures being erected around the tent and has also become an environmental disaster with waste beginning to pile up."

The City previously said the foreign nationals were initially moved to the sites under Covid-19 lockdown regulations after being evicted from Green Market Square and the Central Methodist Church.

They had cited xenophobia fears and demanded relocation to Europe or Canada, which the City deemed impossible.

Around 160 occupants remain at the Wingfield site and approximately 200 at the City-owned Paint City site.