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# Msunduzi warns of legal action as EPWP workers' strike drags on

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Msunduzi Municipality said Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers involved in last week's illegal protest have not yet returned to duty.

Some remain camped outside the Havelock Road depot gates, while others have resorted to absenteeism.

Tensions flared last week at the KaMagwayi Waste Management Depot, where workers blockaded the entrance demanding permanent jobs, fair wages and proper personal protective equipment (PPE).

The municipality issued a stern warning on Thursday, saying legal action would be taken against participants in the protest.

Speaking to The Witness, a worker who asked not to be named said she has since returned to work.

"We had no other option but to return after they threatened us with legal action. What confuses us is how they can take legal action against people who never signed contracts," she said.

She added that on Friday workers submitted clothing sizes after being promised PPE. "Another issue is that we have been monitoring posts from the municipality to apply for jobs, but we haven't seen a single advert. Yet others have been hired to do the same work we are doing," she said.

Municipal spokesperson Ntobeko Mkhize confirmed that legal processes are underway to address the unlawful protest and stabilise operations.

"This protest has disrupted key waste management services, including residential and commercial collections, street sweeping and clearing of illegal dumping," said Mkhize.

"However, the municipality has since resumed operations and is working tirelessly to clear the backlog."

She said waste teams in affected areas are conducting double collections to catch up. "Residents are urged to place their refuse bags out on the morning of their



The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers who blocked the entrance to the Havelock Road offices last week said all they are demanding for are permanent jobs, proper protective clothing (PPE), and fair wages. **PHOTO: MOEKETSI MAMANE**

scheduled collection day to assist with efficient collection," said Mkhize.

The municipality said the PPE issue had been resolved and contract signing for EPWP participants was underway.

Mkhize added that all permanent positions were openly advertised and available to all South Africans. "The municipality discourages residents from paying for waste removal services, as our teams are

actively conducting large-scale clean-up operations to restore normality. We regret the inconvenience and reaffirm our commitment to keeping Pietermaritzburg clean and healthy for all," she said.