

Publication: Sunday World - Main

Title: Police dump building, leave dockets on the floor

Publish date: 27 Jul 2025

Page: 9

Reach: 22300

AVE: R 187616.00

Author: Bongani Mdakane bongani@sundayworld.co.za

Police dump building, leave dockets on the floor

'Crime has shot up since they left'

By **Bongani Mdakane**
bongani@sundayworld.co.za

Two communities in Intabazwe and Tshiame in Harrismith in the eastern Free State have been left without a police station after local cop shops were abandoned years ago.

Both police stations are in shambles, and case dockets are scattered all over dilapidated buildings. As a result, local community members are forced to travel to town for police service.

Locals also stated that they are very concerned about all the private information in the abandoned documents, including dockets, apart from the unkempt buildings being an eyesore.

Speaking to *Sunday World* this week, community members said they were very disappointed and angry at the Free State government for allowing this to happen.

Thabo Mofokeng of Intwabazwe, also known as 42nd Hill, said that he was disappointed that a police station that serviced residents in his neighbourhood is in such a condition.

"The police station was fully



Scattered and abandoned documents, including docket files, in the Intabazwe and Tshiame police stations, which were abandoned years ago. / Supplied

functional, and we were getting services we needed, but suddenly, and without explanation, it was deserted. What is worse is that crime has shot through the roof. When criminals attack, we have no one to call quickly to our aid," said Mofokeng.

Another resident, Gloria Buthelezi, said that it was worse for pensioners who go to the Sassa offices opposite the disused police station.

"In the past, when they needed a document certified, they would just go across to the police station; now they have to get into a taxi to town, and when they return, the Sassa office is closed."

"It is not right," she said.

Martin Mavimbela, a resident of Tshiame, told *Sunday World* that he was disappointed in the ANC government.

"Now, when we call the police to report a crime at night, they only arrive the following day, and obviously there's no police visibility, so criminals do as they please. This is a serious concern for us.

"If information in those case dockets landed in the wrong hands, can you imagine the bad things that could happen?"

"There are ID copies there, and there are sensitive documents about people who were investigated but found to have done nothing wrong, which

should be kept safe. There is deeply personal information about victims of abuse there – it's just a mess," said Mavimbela.

Sunday World was informed that the Harrismith police station, now servicing the town as well as Intabazwe, Tshiame and Makgolokweng village, is understaffed.

DA spokesperson on community safety in the Free State legislature, Roy Jankielsohn, said that during an oversight visit to the abandoned police stations, they discovered that the buildings had been stripped bare.

"What is of further concern is that sensitive SAPS documents such as dockets and note-

books are scattered around in the buildings. These documents contain statements and personal information of complainants.

"These cases were in all probability never investigated. Some of the case dockets that were there have since been set alight," said Jankielsohn.

Free State Department of Community Safety spokesperson Hillary Mophethe said there had been an investigation into the condition of the Intabazwe police station, hence the national police and Department of Public Works should answer.

"We have reported the matter to the provincial police commissioner, and we take no responsibility for dockets that are scattered everywhere, including the vandalised police station.

She said there were plans to restore police operations at the satellite station.

National police spokesperson Colonel Athlenda Mathe said the Intabazwe police station had been vandalised during public unrest and that it was not "economically viable" to repair it.

"A new police station has been built in Tshiame and the contractor would possibly hand it over in September/October 2025."

She added that policing needs in Intabazwe would be revisited.