



public works

Department:  
Public Works  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Issued by Chief Directorate: Communications

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**Issue Date: 03 FEBRUARY 2022**

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE APPLAUDS SAPS FOR ASSISTANCE AND ARRESTS AFTER AN ATTEMPTED BUILDING SITE TAKEOVER**

The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has expressed its gratitude to members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) for their swift response in arresting a group of armed men who were trying to forcefully take over the Durban High Court construction site.

At around 08h00 on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February, a heavily-armed group of men, allegedly from a local development forum, forced access on to the site, stopped workers and chased away contractors appointed by the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in an attempt to gain control of the construction site.

The Acting Director-General of the Department, Mr Imtiaz Fazel, then issued an instruction for SAPS to be called for assistance and for charges to be laid. SAPS and the SAPS Tactical Team responded, arresting six people in the process.

The High Court redevelopment and renovation project by the DPWI started on the 06<sup>th</sup> of May and is expected to be completed in September 2025 at a cost of R850 million. The project done for the Department of Justice, is for the redevelopment of the Durban High Court, including renovating the existing historic building, as well as the construction of two new buildings to accommodate additional courtrooms and High Court staff.

The project has required court staff to be relocated during construction. The temporary site of the Durban High Court is at the Durban Magistrates Court and the provision of alternative buildings was completed on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

The DPWI expects the entire project to be completed in September 2025, but site invasions such as the one which occurred this week add delays and costs to the project, which is ultimately funded by the taxpayer.

Mr Fazel has commended the SAPS for their swift and decisive action in arresting those responsible for invasion of the site. "It is such disruptions that have led to delays in many projects, disrupting service delivery and holding the country to ransom. We would like to reiterate that as a Department we will prosecute, to the fullest extent of the law, anyone who seeks to illegally benefit from state infrastructure projects," he concluded.

Construction at the site is expected to resume on Monday the 07<sup>th</sup> February.

**Ends**

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