



public works

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MEDIA STATEMENT

GOVERNMENT RELOCATES PEOPLE ACCOMMODATED AT GOVERNMENT - OWNED PROPERTY AT POMFRET

MAFIKENG – The first group of former Pomfret residents arrived in Mafikeng today (12 March 2008) as part of government's efforts to relocate them throughout the North West Province in a prelude to the phasing out of this erstwhile military base built on an asbestos mine.

The first 30 households who have volunteered to be moved were being assisted with transportation and furniture removals on their journey to Mafikeng, where free government houses (and associated benefits) had been allocated to them. Others will be moved in batches over a period.

Following the departure of the Defence Force from the base in mid 1990s, some ex-members of the Force and their families were left behind and since then protracted engagements had been entered into to find alternative accommodation for them.

After a series of meetings with the people accommodated at the government-owned buildings at Pomfret, many households indicated their willingness to be relocated, on first- come first-serve basis, to the housing stocks available at various municipalities in the province. In the meantime certain groupings at Pomfret were resisting the relocation and had on several occasions accosted those who were willing to be moved. In the last community meeting held at Pomfret towards the end of 2007, the group resisting the relocation quit the meeting and threatened with legal process. The situation was exacerbated by the political parties which regularly visited the area to pledge solidarity.

Pomfret was a former military base but currently managed by the National Department of Public Works as the custodians of state's immoveable assets (i.e. land and buildings). The base was the property of government and the Department of Public Works has continuously provided basic services including water and electricity as well as basic maintenance of infrastructure most of which has been vandalized to the state of disrepair.

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