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MEDIA STATEMENT

- **Public Works and Infrastructure Deputy Minister Sihle Zikalala issues eviction notices on illegal occupiers of state properties in Cape Town.**
- **Intensifies Operation Bring Back to recover, stole, hijacked and illegally occupied state properties.**

Public Works and Infrastructure Deputy Minister Sihle Zikalala has issued eviction notices to over a hundred illegal occupants who have hijacked State properties in Cape Town. Two properties in Goodwood and Khayelitsha meant for use by the SAPS have been stolen and are illegally occupied.

Deputy Minister Zikalala issued the eviction notices while leading Operation Bring Back (OBB) in Cape Town.

Operation Bring Back is a nation-wide campaign led by DPWI Deputy Minister, Sihle Zikalala and its intended purpose is to recover all stolen state land and property. Some of these properties included those that are vacated by user departments without being brought back to the department and have become vulnerable to illegal occupation. As a result some are run down due to overcrowding and dilapidation and lack of management by state institutions to which such are allocated.

During this Cape Town leg of the operation bring back campaign many whistle-blowers came forward and others physically brought evidence to the Deputy Minister of stolen properties by even commercial entities and NGO's.

Zikalala is leading a nationwide OBB campaign, in a bid to get back State properties including land that was stolen, hijacked and illegally occupied.

The Goodwood property Zikalala first visited is a residential property that was donated to the asset portfolio of government by patriotic citizen the late Clair Shelly Boulton, to be used by the South African Police Service. In her will, she clearly stated that the property must be used by the SAPS for fighting drug abuse in the community. The property has since been hijacked and is believed to be used as a drug peddling den against the very will of the patriotic citizen that donated the property.

Illegal occupants have invaded the property and have erected temporal structures. Currently there are 12 illegal occupants including children. There is allegedly rampant substance abuse including drugs in the property.

The second property visited is the 946.90 Ha on Stellenbotch Road near Khayelitsha which was allocated for a mixed use by SAPS including residential accommodation, public order policing, stock theft, anti-gang and shooting range. The farm was used to accommodate SAPS officials, many of them have since left after being deployed to other areas, leaving many of the houses vacant.

The farm has huge vast of land which has been illegally occupied and informal settlements proliferation is taking place.

Zikalala's visit has revealed a huge problem of hijacked state properties not only by the poor and people desperate for houses but by big commercial entities, NGO's and hoodlums posing as owners and collecting rent money from illegal occupiers.

The eviction notices have been served and the deadline of tonight, 31 August at 23h59 for all illegal occupiers to vacate. Failure to comply will result in the courts been approached for contempt and violation and this will result in evictions being carried out by law enforcement agencies.

"Clearly the problem of illegally occupied, hijacked and stolen government properties is extensive and underestimated. We are seeing a strong element of poor management of state assets that are handed over to client departments who do not hand them back the department who those allocated vacate them" said Deputy Minister Sihle Zikalala.

Zikalala will be intensifying the operation bring back in the coming months. A support programme which includes appointment of property specialists has been developed to identify, audit, analyse, evict and recover illegally occupied and hijacked buildings. The focus is on all buildings that are supposed to be in the immovable asset register of the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

IN carrying out evictions of land and buildings by an unauthorised occupant, the department follows legal processes including the Prevention of Illegal Eviction (PIE) from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act, 19 of 1998, which regulates the eviction of unlawful occupiers from land and property in a fair manner, while recognising the right of landowners to apply to a court for an eviction order in appropriate circumstances.

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