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No chaos at Itsoseng schools

ELFAS TORERAI

PUPILS and teachers at schools in Itsoseng have got down to business with no incidents of disruptions reported yesterday.

Learning and teaching started on Monday after violent community protests forced the closure of schools in the first week of opening.

The education and sport development department confirmed that everything was back to normal in the area.

John Thetheletsa of the APC said: "I have been to Itsoseng and Verdwaal this morning and everything is fine. On Monday, schools started on time and ended the day without an incident reported."

Thetheletsa said residents were happy that a group of people who started last week's violent protests had been arrested.

The clash started on the opening day of school when Itsoseng residents barred children from Verdwaal from attending school. This was in response to a tiff between the two townships over employment opportunities at one of the projects in Verdwaal.

Itsoseng residents claimed they were overlooked when it came to employment and the best response was for them to bar Verdwaal pupils from attending school in Itsoseng.

A group from Verdwaal then stormed more than 10 schools, forcing classes to be put on hold. Some pupils were injured during the confrontation with the group and had to receive urgent medical attention.

A number of houses were set alight and vehicles damaged in the violence that ensued.

At a special community meeting to resolve the impasse, it was agreed that



CLASS IN SESSION: Learning and teaching at Itsoseng started on Monday after violent community protests. PICTURE: PHUMLANI THABETHE

schools would start and that no one would be allowed to disrupt classes.

MECs for education, sport development and community safety, Sello Lehari and Dr Mpho Motlhabane, met residents and assured them that the safety of children would be top priority.

Residents from Verdwaal demanded that a school be built in their area. They also called for scholar transport arguing that some of their children travel more than 3.5km on foot to school.

Lehari acceded to the idea of a school in Verdwaal.

"The education department has realised that the only primary school in Verdwaal is not enough to cater the community. Therefore the department will build another primary school in order to service the community in the area.

"The department will start by establishing a task team, which will be made up of members from the community and officials of the department. This

task team will drive the process until the school is built," he said.

Lehari assured residents that both departments would ensure that teachers and pupils were safe at school.

"It is the duty of principals to make sure that school gates are always closed and keep a register of everyone entering the school premises. You should always alert the police whenever there are abnormal incidents at school," he said.

Motlhabane weighed in, saying police would be visible when the pupils crossed the road in the morning and after school.

"The police will be present in the area to make sure that there is peace. The police will adopt these schools.

"Since the distance walked by pupils does not allow for the department to provide a bus, bicycles will be given to pupils," he said.

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Mbalula tightens screws on illicit traders

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MINISTER of Police Fikile Mbalula has vowed to clamp down on drug dens and brothels across the country.

This comes after protesters torched 13 houses and vandalised seven others allegedly used as drug dens and brothels when violent demonstrations against prostitution and human trafficking broke out in Krugersdorp.

The protests against crime that started on Friday intensified on Monday.

Residents are accusing foreign nationals of running drug dens and brothels in the area and claim that young girls are kidnapped and forced into the sex trade.

A police station in Munsieville township was set on fire. Two workshops in Krugersdorp and at least three shops were vandalised and looted.

"We've got no time to waste. There is going to be change," Mbalula said ahead of a meeting with residents in Kagiso yesterday.

Gauteng police spokes-



CLAMPDOWN: Residents in Krugersdorp torched suspected drug dens and brothels over concerns about human trafficking.

PICTURE: NOKUTHULA MBATHA/AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY/ANA

person Colonel Lungelo Dlamini said 59 people were arrested and were expected to appear in court today.

Violence broke out in Kagiso and Munsieville after a young woman was kidnapped and later found in one of the houses allegedly used as a

brothel along Sivewright Street in Krugersdorp.

Mbalula said he was moved by the concerns of the community.

"I need to hear what are their concerns about the police before I blame them for taking the law into their own hands (and) so that I can act. I must stamp the authority of the state to ensure that the rule of law prevails in this country.

"The rule of law will prevail if we are doing our job.

"These people cannot just wake up and just take up to the streets...." Mbalula said.

He told various stakeholders before addressing the community that there was a concern in various parts of the country about drug dens and brothels, Mbalula said he visited Quigney in the Eastern Cape recently where the community had been complaining

about three houses used as brothels and drug dens for a decade.

Mbalula said he found young girls in the houses and the foreign nationals were arrested. He said the police had to go back to simple and basic policing to curb crime.

Similar concerns were raised by protesters in Rustenburg in the North West.

Meanwhile Krugersdorp Community Policing Forum chairperson Gert Jonker said "the focal point of the anger and frustration is (the) safety and security of unhappy citizens that (has) boiled over in the violent actions we've witnessed over the past few days".

FF Plus councillor in Mogale City, Amanda de Lange, said the community's message to the police was clear, "do your job or we'll do it for you".

@smashaba

Drug, brothel pledge

POLICE Minister Fikile Mbalula has vowed to clamp down on drug dens and brothels across the country.

This comes after protesters torched a total of 13 houses and vandalised seven others allegedly used as drug dens and brothels when violent demonstrations against prostitution and human trafficking hit Krugersdorp.

The protests against crime that started on Friday intensified on Monday, shutting down the West Rand town.

Residents accuse foreigners of running drug dens and brothels, claiming young girls are forced into the sex trade. - Nokuthula Mbatha

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Mbalula vows to smoke out peddlers

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Minister slams corrupt cops and promises to clean up rot in Mogale City

By **Tankiso Makhetla**

Angry Kagiso residents have appealed to Police Minister Fikile Mbalula to deploy the army in the township in a bid to rid it of drug peddling and human trafficking.

Hundreds of residents yesterday gathered at the Kagiso Community Hall where they met with Mbalula against the backdrop of a violent protest that swept across Mogale City on Monday.

Nthibane Mosalake said they wanted Mbalula to deploy soldiers to bring an end to criminality in the township.

"We want Mbalula to make sure that our township is free of drugs. We want these Nigerians out of our communities because of the drugs they bring into our community," Mosalake said.

Mbalula was accompanied to the area by national police commissioner Lieutenant-General Khehla Sitole and Mogale City mayor Patrick Lipudi.

He said Operation Fiela would be integrated into Mogale City to clean up the rot that has developed.

"Operation Fiela was created to address all these issues. We cannot coexist with criminals and we cannot wait for any situation to get out of control. Where there are drug dens, police must clamp down on those places," Mbalula said.

He said criminality thrived because police officers were willing to be bribed.

"... that is why these things are thriving, we will bring an end to all of this," he said.

Some residents in Krugersdorp were yesterday counting the cost of Monday's protests. Thousands of community members had stormed the town in a bid to rid it



A burnt satellite police station in Krugersdorp on the West Rand.

/ SANDILE NDLOVU

of drug peddlers and human trafficking syndicates. Houses suspected of being brothels and drug dens were torched, while shops in the area were looted.

One of the victims of the mob rampage, Nigerian national John Ucho, who runs a liquor store in Krugersdorp, said the protest turned into a looting frenzy.

"If they wanted to get rid of drug dealers, they should have done so. But we are here to make a living," Ucho said.

Ucho's liquor store, along with several others, was looted and vandalised.

Resident Vusi Thwala said the police had failed the community despite numerous complaints over drug peddling and kidnappings being reported.

"We are happy that the state is starting to take us seriously. It's high time they listened to us," Thwala said.

Another resident, Titus Moremi, said it was regrettable that foreign-owned shops

in Kagiso were also damaged during the protest. "It's just criminal elements that somehow managed to creep into the protest. People were fed up, but we can't justify that [looting]," he said.