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Police station set alight

Tigane residents go on the rampage as illegal protest over 'ill-treatment' from mines turns violent, shops looted

THYS MOKGWAETSE

A SATELLITE police station was burnt down after angry residents of Tigane, near Klerksdorp, ran amok as they complained of ill-treatment from Shiva Uranium Mine by not employing locals and retrenching others too.

Shops were also looted, resulting in the arrest of some community members.

Among those arrested was community leader Buti Shuping, a local councillor and EFF regional secretary for the Dr Kenneth Kaunda district.

Though charges against some were later dropped after they appeared in the Klerksdorp Magistrate's Court on Friday, Shuping is due back in court on October 27. He faces further charges of malicious damage to property.

"There was a plan to arrest Shuping all along because when he was arrested, he was not even part of the protests. He was on his way to address the media, but the police had just decided to arrest him," provincial EFF leader Johannes Motshwane said.

"We are blaming the police who came without warning the community, but just shot at them. These are the police who showed that they were not well trained."

These illegal protests were allegedly caused by the anger of the community who feel that both community members and the business people are now suf-

fering.

Some ATM's around the area were vandalised in the mayhem that ensued. Foreign national business owners were forced to seek refuge at Hartebeesfontein police station.

The situation only calmed down late on Friday after Shuping was granted bail and he addressed community members.

While attempts to get comment from the mine were fruitless, North West police commissioner Lt-Gen Baile Mostwenyane condemned the violence and destruction of property.

"What happened in Tigane is pure criminality that cannot be tolerated. We would like to make it clear to those who are committing acts of violence that the long arm of the law will catch up with them," Mostwenyane said.

The police said that acts of criminality continued when goods were looted from a tuck shop and a liquor store while an ATM was also damaged.

"A case of attempted murder has been opened for investigation by the Independent Police Investigative Directorate. This is after two children sustained alleged gunshot wounds," North West police spokesperson Brig Sabata Mokgwabone said.

"At this stage, the police are investigating cases of public violence and arson and no one has been arrested in these cases."

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SOCIAL UNREST: A bakkie and liquor store were gutted when irate Tigane residents went on the rampage over mine jobs and retrenchments in the area, with shops looted and a satellite police station set ablaze.



One of the damaged and looted shops. Photo by Mohanoe Khiba

MOSARS NEG.

RELEASE ALL TO RESTORE THE PEACE

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By MOHANOE KHIBA
TIGANE in North West is calmer following the withdrawal of charges against protesters.

This was after 11 people were arrested on Wednesday for allegedly pelting police vehicles with stones and throwing a petrol bomb at a poultry abattoir.

The protesters appeared at the Klerksdorp Magistrates Court on Friday, when their charges were withdrawn.

Only Buti Shuping's case was not withdrawn and was postponed to next Friday.

EFF's Shuping is the regional secretary for the Dr Kenneth Kaunda Municipality and the Matlosana municipal PR councillor.

He faces charges of malicious damage to property but was released on bail on Friday.

Provincial EFF leader Johannes Motshwane addressed the crowd.

He said: "There was a

plan to arrest Shuping. We say this because when he was arrested he wasn't even part of the protest. He was on his way to address the media but police just decided to come and arrest him."

SAPS provincial commissioner Lieutenant-General Baile Motswenyane said the community's anger spilled over because of news that Shiva Uranium Mine in Tigane had dismissed workers. They accused it of not employing locals.

Protesters looted shops, vandalised ATMs, barricaded roads and burned down a bottle-store and a satellite police station.

Foreigners gathered at the Hartbeesfontein Police Station for safety.

Motswenyane said residents are now demanding that everyone must be released for peace to be restored.

He condemned the violence during the week-long protest.

Tlotlo was going to the shop

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in Tigane, near Klerksdorp, North West.

His gogo, Regina Mbiti (57) who takes care of him, had sent him to the shop when he was hit.

This was during a protest last Thursday in Tigane. Residents were protesting against the retrenchment of mineworkers at a nearby mine.

His mother, Ntombi Mbiphi (36), does not live with the family but stays in nearby Jouberton, also in Klerksdorp.

Tlotlo is being treated in Tshepong Hospital.

According to witnesses, the police ignored Tlotlo and carried on hurling teargas. Another person was also hit and taken to hospital with serious wounds on his leg. Cops allegedly fired teargas at a locked door, leaving the

resident slightly injured.

When angry protesters learned what had happened to Tlotlo, they burned down a satellite police station and a bottle-store as they suspected the owner had called the cops.

Tlotlo's uncle and aunt said they demand justice.

"Police tried to take away the canisters but we wouldn't let them. We suspect they wanted to remove evidence," said Magadi.

Vuyekile said the cops had already started claiming they had not injured Tlotlo.

Police spokesman Brigadier Sabata Mokgwabone said a case of attempted murder was opened for investigation by the Independent Police Investigative Directorate after two people were admitted to hospital after the incident.



Family hopes for the best as Tlotlo (13) fights for his life

By DULILE SOWAGA

WHEN THE teargas canister hit him, the 13-year-old boy fell down, bleeding from the head.

He was taken to hospital and is still in ICU, suffering from a serious wound.

ACCORDING TO HIS UNCLE, HE MAY SUFFER PERMANENT BRAIN DAMAGE.

When his mum speaks to him in hospital, he responds by moving his fingers from a serious wound.

It seems as if his right hand is dead," said his uncle, Vuyekile Mbiphi (31).

Tlotlo Mbiphi (13) lives with his uncle Vuyekile and aunt Magadi Mthohmi (35).

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FIGHTING ON: Tlotlo Mbiphi is in a critical condition in hospital.

MSAPS 129 (NEG)

Residents demand action!



Danville residents say they are tired of poor service delivery.

Photo by Otsile Tlape

By OTSILE TLAPE

ANGRY residents took to the streets on Friday, demanding that roads be fixed and action taken against local drug dealers.

The people of Danville, near Mahikeng in North West, said they were gatvol of bad service delivery.

Community leader Joseph Thomas said the police were not doing enough to deal with the issue of drugs.

"Our roads are very bad, especially when it rains. Roads must be tarred and maintained," he said.

"The police must also work to tackle the issue of drugs in the area.

"We are concerned that some youths are involved in drugs."

Councillor Stephen van Rooyen said at one point angry residents threatened to throw stones at him. He said although his life was in danger, he decided not to open a case of intimidat-

tion.

"The roads are included in the integrated development plan, meaning they will be prioritised and tarred. We will soon have another meeting with all partners, including the cops, municipal officials and Eskom, to address the issues raised by residents."

North West police spokeswoman Lieutenant-Colonel Pelonomi Makau said the cops were fighting drugs in the province.

"The police are not ignoring the national fight against drugs.

"We are continuing with awareness campaigns to warn people against the dangers of drugs. We have been to Letlhabile and Potchefstroom, and we will soon visit Mahikeng," she said.

She appealed to residents to report cases of people using drugs or selling them to young people.

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'Caution on N12' pos

ELFAS TORERA

THE South African National Roads Agency (Sanral) has called on motorists to be cautious and patient when driving between Windsorton and the Northern Cape/North West border due to ongoing road works.

About 25km of the road is undergoing repairs and only one lane is open to traffic in both directions. Construction started in August.

"The project entails the repairing of pavement defects, the upgrading of rest areas and taxi and bus stops along the route, the upgrading of intersections and access roads and the resealing of the surface to improve the riding quality for road users," Sanral western region manager Kobus van der Walt said.

He said stop/go traffic accommodation will continue to be implemented and the flow of two-way traffic will be accommodated on one lane while the other is constructed.

"Motorists are asked to plan their trips accordingly. Reduced speed limits will be enforced during the construction period."

Hawks foil rhino poachers

ELFAS TORERAI

FIVE people will appear in the Rustenburg Magistrate's Court today after being nabbed for a conspiracy to poach rhinos at a local farm.

The accused were arrested after an intelligence-driven operation conducted by the Hawks in the North West, working in conjunction with their colleagues from the national office.

Hawks head in the province, Maj-Gen Linda Mbana said that the five were apprehended in Lethabong village on Thursday night on allegations that they intended to poach rhino.

"The group of men aged between 35 and 70 was reportedly intending to poach rhinos at a farm in Lethabong village when they were stopped by the Hawks. "Upon searching the two suspects' vehicles, a hunting rifle, a silencer and rounds of ammunition were found, including money and several cellular phones.

"The group was subsequently arrested," Mbana said.

She said the five would appear in court today facing charges of illegal possession of a firearm and conspiracy to commit rhino poaching.

Mbana praised officers who worked hard to stop the five in the nick of time before any animals could be killed.

She also heaped praise on community members who continued to blow the whistle on shady activities in their areas.

"We will move swiftly to ensure the suspects are apprehended."

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Hawks pos.

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TMA

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