

'Release jailed protesters'

TNA, PG 1, 17/05/17, MWSAB, NEGATIVE

SEVEN PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED DURING A SERVICE DELIVERY PROTEST IN IKAGELENG

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COMMUNITY members in Ikageleng near Zeerust went on rampage yesterday, demanding the release of seven people arrested during a recent service delivery protest.

They were arrested on Monday.

One of the community leaders, Pora Lencwe, said they also demanded answers from Ramotshere-Moiloa local municipality to a memorandum they submitted three weeks ago.

Lencwe said the municipality had failed to allocate RDP houses to the correct beneficiaries, there was a lack of water and the tender awarding system needed to be scrapped.

"We are aware that the tender awarding system at the municipality favours some well-connected individuals," Lencwe said.

"There is a challenge regarding the allocation of RDP houses. The councillors dictate who receives the houses, while we have people who continue to live in abject poverty.

"There is a high rate of unemployment in the area while the municipality fails to create job opportunities. The municipality has cut electricity for those who qualify as indigents. We need that to be corrected. Finally, we demand the release of seven people who were arrested on Monday."

He said the department of culture,

arts and traditional affairs failed them dismally on its mandate. Lencwe further said many young people who were artists were not supported in growing their craft in the area.

However, mayor Kereng Mothoagae denied the claims. Mothoagae said they were supposed to meet with community leaders on Tuesday. She said the scheduled meeting did not happen because the community refused them entry.

"We received a memorandum from community members three weeks ago," Mothoagae said. "However, the delay was caused when responding to them. We tried by all means to communicate with them on Monday. Unfortunately, the situation was tense and we were prohibited from meeting on Tuesday.

"We had to liaise with other stakeholders to gather answers for their demands because some of them are provincial government departments' mandates. The municipal officials will liaise with them tomorrow after the memorial service of our former mayor, Simon Senna. We hope to find common ground and address these matters."

Some tuck shops and local municipal offices were torched. A Somali, Rana Abdul, who is a tuck shop owner said: "The protesters stole everything from my shop. I lost everything in there. They also torched it. We do not feel safe anymore. We wish the police would arrest those criminals."



TENSE: Police monitoring the situation in Ikageng location near Zeerust as the community demanded answers from the local municipality and the release of the seven people arrested during a service delivery protest on Monday. PICTURE: MPHOTO BILWANE