

## **Poor Service Delivery Threatens to Spark Community**

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On October 9, 2022, 18 families in Kliptown, Soweto, lost their homes after a huge fire that started after midnight. 20 homes were vandalised by the fire which was started by a man who came home drunk, then started cooking before falling asleep. On October 24 the Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Housing in Gauteng, Cllr. Mlungisi Mabaso, allocated 20 shacks to the community of Kliptown whose shacks were burned down during the fire.

The families were assured of legal electricity since the shacks were allocated to them. As of this date, they are still waiting for a legal electrical connection. The government has promised the people from Kliptown and has not followed through.

Marshell Gouws (38) said, "we will not wait for the government to hear us. We will take matters into our own hands and steal electricity. Maybe then they will start taking us seriously [then]."

Local residents are unimpressed with poor service delivery on their part. They are tired of these empty statements. Their parents are unemployed and cannot afford to buy paraffin or gas stoves, some children have to bathe in cold water. They have to set a fire at night just so that they can prepare supper for their families.

Clearly, the community has been pleading with the leaders to represent their interests to the government. This has not happened so they want to take matters into their own hands. A third community member said, "this is not the first time they promise us reliable service and then do not deliver until we strike and close the streets. That's when they are forced to respond because it is the only wake-up call they will get."

Kliptown is one of the oldest townships in Johannesburg but the government generally does not deliver services there. It is exhausting to live in these conditions, and most residents are giving up. There is no clear way forward for them.

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