

Freedom Park Community Still Without Proper Access to Water

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Release date: 17 October 2021

Many areas around Gauteng have been experiencing ongoing problems with water services, some have been without water for more than a week at a time and there is often no indication of when it will be restored. Freedom Park informal settlement (south of Johannesburg) is one of the areas where residents are affected by not having water for a long time now and the community have demanded answers and are angry.

Nothile, 37-year-old woman residing in Freedom Park said; “we have been struggling for more than a week to get proper access to water after we have been promised [assistance].”

She also mentioned that at times residents have to walk down to the local shopping centre to get water, which is being sold to the people. “[It] is exhausting and expensive, because most of us are not working in the community,” she said.

Nothile added that “as a community we have tried all means to speak to the ward councillor, Mangaliso, who has also failed us... the only thing we hear from him is that he is in contact with people to assist and the worst part of it is that he does not address us he always sends someone to address us, so we feel like we are not heard.”

When asked about this, ANC Ward Councillor, Mangaliso Leonard Ngwenya said “I have been in touch with the relevant people to assist us and I have been told to be patient and wait. It is also very frustrating for me as a leader of the Freedom Park community to keep the people waiting, because I know how important water is and we cannot survive without it, which is why I am trying also to get some tanks in the informal settlement for people to have proper access to water.”

“We are working on a plan to do so and my team has addressed [the Freedom Park community] to make them aware of the plan.”

Ngwenya added; “I really do wish there was a better way to assist them but unfortunately I have to wait to hear from these people to provide us with proper access to water, but for now the tanks are the only way forward to give [the community] what they need and we hope they will not have to wait longer than two months to have normal running water from a tap.”

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