

## **Street Vendors Harassed in Yeoville**

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Since the first weeks of January 2026, the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) has been evacuating street vendors from the areas where they sell their goods. These areas are in one of the busiest parts of Yeoville in Johannesburg, where vendors typically earn a decent income due to the high volume of people passing by. The location is also close to shops and supermarkets, making it a profitable trading space for many traders.

Street vendors are being removed from selling near shops and supermarkets due to the municipal regulations and bylaws that are aimed at maintaining cleanliness around these areas. These removals affect vulnerable people, such as women and struggling working class people, who depend on selling goods to survive. The street vendors are being harassed, and their goods are being confiscated.

Since the vendors are being removed from where they usually work, they are forced to sell in dirty places, posing a health risk to themselves and their customers. Since this evacuation, vendors have been struggling to provide for their families, some are breadwinners in the family, and they are left with no source of income. The municipality says, street vendors must get permits to sell in the designated areas. Unfortunately, most street vendors cannot afford the permits, and some do not even have proper documentation for the permit.

The municipality should at least build shelters and provide spaces for street vendors to sell because there are no jobs in South Africa. The government and the municipality should also prioritise supporting street vendors by adding rules and regulations that recognise the contribution of street vendors in the economy and provide them with a secure, safe environment.

“This whole thing [incident] has not considered other families who depend on this to eat because some families do not have the qualifications and documents to look for proper jobs. They use their last money to buy stock, but it gets taken away from them. This is wrong,” said Sibusiso, a resident in Yeoville.

Those who rely on selling goods will not be able to live the way they want to, since they are now unemployed. The government doesn't care who is affected, said Vernon, also a resident in Yeoville.

It is not entirely known when the street vendors will get assistance, but the government should move fast in order for the vendors to be able to survive and help feed their families. We need everyone to be equal, even if we don't have the same profession or experience. Vendors are people too and should be listened to.

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