

Zolani Squatter Camp's Painful Story

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The Zolani Squatter Camp in Makhanda, Eastern Cape is now existence for 32 years. Imagine 32 years without any service delivery, like no taps inside their yards or gravel roads!

It's really a shame really for people to be living in a place like this for the past 32 years. For even the available taps there are, are few and far between. A known fact is that Makhanda's rate of unemployment is very high, and they cannot help the number of people that are living there. When residents try to talk to their councillor, they say he keeps on promising even though there's still no change in Zolani. This includes the electricity they struggle a lot to get.

Moreover, they also mention that the councillor is sometimes arrogant when they want information. They report, he would tell them that if they want the information, they must go by themselves to the municipality. This makes it look like there's still no hope of getting what they deserve. But the spirit of not giving up from their side is what kept them going, and trying to better their lives, and their situation.

I mean 32 years is a long period of time for the people of Zolani to still not have decent houses. Also, the place is not suitable for them to stay. Like Refiloe Mohapi, who is staying there with her father who is now completely blind. She explained that even if her father can get a house, he won't be able to see it physically, just spiritually.

Zolani is one of the oldest squatter camps in Makhanda as there are those who came after it. But at least they are in "better" condition than Zolani. A matter which makes residents angrier this is why we, as the Unemployed People's Movement (UPM), are trying by all means to support them. This includes pushing adequate human settlement, whether it is land for them to build their houses.

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