

# Eviction despair: 850 remain in limbo

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Independent Newspapers TEARFUL: A resident who lost her home in Nomzamo wipes away tears as she prays with Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba at the Nomzamo Community hall. The Archbishop urged residents not to lose hope. Pictures: Adrian de Kock.

Cape Town - Nearly a week after about 850 Nomzamo residents were made homeless when their shacks were destroyed to make way for a Sanral development, the government is still trying to identify a suitable piece of land for their resettlement.

While the City of Cape Town and Sanral have spent much of the week bickering over who was to blame for the callous circumstances of the eviction, hundreds of the newly homeless have found shelter in the Nomzamo Community Hall. Others have been housed by friends and family.

Human Settlements minister Lindiwe Sisulu, meanwhile, has announced a ministerial inquiry headed by Advocate Denzil Potgieter to get to the truth of the evictions.

## **LAND IDENTIFIED**

Several potential pieces of land have been identified to which the residents could be relocated.

A local ANC delegation, for instance, has pointed to land near Stellenbosch, Kuils River and Mfuleni – all quite a distance from Strand, where many Nomzamo residents work.



AFTERMATH: Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, centre, and Bishop Margaret Virtue, left, walk over the remains of shacks in Nomzamo yesterday. They were part of a group of religious leaders who visited the area. Independent Newspapers

Sisulu's spokesman Ndivhuwo Mabaya said the City of Cape Town would first have to determine if the land chosen was habitable.

Mayor Patricia de Lille said yesterday the city was ready to provide 235 emergency housing kits, but first needed land to be identified by national government and Sanral.

As residents waited for news of their future in the Nomzamo Community hall yesterday, Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba and members of the Western Cape Religious Leaders Forum visited the land where they used to live. The rectangular strip on the edge of Nomzamo, where hundreds of wooden and corrugated iron shacks still stood last Sunday, is now largely deserted.

Local ministers led Makgoba and his party between muddy puddles to show him the aftermath of the evictions.

While more valuable possessions have been carted away, much points to the fact that people lived there very recently.

Makgoba walked through a landscape littered with cracked chairs, torn plastic sheeting, broken tables, rain-soaked wooden beams and smashed crockery. At one point he noticed a drenched textbook and stopped to pick it up.

## **COMMUNITY DESTROYED**

Speaking to the Weekend Argus afterwards, Makgoba said while he had seen the aftermath of the "destruction" of a community, he had been filled with hope when he met three Nomzamo residents who have stood guard over the property of evicted neighbours.

The trio, who spoke to Makgoba for some time, were not among the evicted, but live in formal housing nearby.

Eric Nqanqaru, supporting himself on crutches, said he had been looking after some of the possessions of the evicted.

“We are here to just look after these things,” he said.

Most of what he is guarding is building materials. Together with Luvuyo Fakuni and Ntshoni Mbongeni, Nqanqaru has stood guard since the beginning of last week.

The trio stand in a street facing the piece of land from which the residents were evicted. Behind them, in the yards of houses, are neat piles of wooden boards, corrugated iron sheets and various pieces of furniture.

Nqanqaru said he knows the members of community who used to live on the land.

“Some (people) don’t know why we are standing here,” he said. “They don’t know that we have families and friends who came from here.”

Before Makgoba visited the eviction site, he spent time at the nearby community centre where the affected residents are staying.

When he arrived at noon, a bakkie from the Western Cape Community Chest was unloading donated blankets, food and baby goods.

The Anglican Archbishop prayed with about 300 people and urged them not to lose hope.

Speaking in Xhosa and English, he said that what had happened “breaks the spiritual heart of our nation”.

He praised organisations that had been assisting the residents, such as Ses’khona and the Community Chest.

### **Weekend Argus**

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/eviction-despair-850-remain-in-limbo-1.1699985#.VCFdhdacxfg>