

Makgoba intercedes in toilet fight

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Staff Reporters

The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Thabo Makgoba, has offered to act as a mediator in the ongoing row around unenclosed toilets in Makhaza, Khayelitsha.

Makgoba visited the area on Tuesday afternoon with the Social Justice Coalition (SJC) and spoke to residents whose toilets had been removed by City of Cape Town officials.

He also inspected some of the flimsy enclosures of the remaining toilets. Many of the enclosures, put up by the owners, were made of wooden boards and zinc sheets.

Nophumzile Mbutho, 42, said that since her toilet had been removed, she has had to revert to the bucket system. Her neighbours have an enclosed toilet, but she said they were not keen on sharing.

"We have prayed about this, so I think God sent (Makgoba) here to help us," said Mbutho.

After speaking to residents, Makgoba said he felt "pained and sad" that people did not have access to the basic right of sanitation.

"I came here because I wanted to see, touch, smell and walk what these people were going through," said Makgoba.

Makgoba said that all people involved needed to acknowledge that things had gone horribly wrong in Makhaza, apologise for their part in it, and seek a resolution.

"Let's not point fingers and have political point-scoring. I am pleading that people's dignity be respected and the issues of health and safety are taken into consideration," said Makgoba.

He said he would ask for a meeting with Mayor Dan Plato and Premier Helen Zille, and would offer to help.

The SJC's Gavin Silber said it was important that someone of Makgoba's stature serve as mediator in the process because he was a non-partisan leader respected by the community and the government.

Meanwhile, the provincial government and the City of Cape Town will now consider the recommendations made by the Human Rights Commission on the Makhaza situation.

Zille said if the report suggested the city had acted inhumanely and violated human rights by erecting unenclosed toilets and then breaking them down, national legislation would be called into question.

Zille on Tuesday addressed the press, saying she had liaised with Sicelo Shiceka, the Minister of Corporate Governance and Traditional Affairs.

Zille and Shiceka are expected to visit Khayelitsha together in the coming weeks.

Zille has given the minister a memorandum outlining the events she says have led to the current situation in Makhaza.

Makhaza made headlines in May when ANC Youth League leaders and city officials clashed over the unenclosed toilets.

http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/makgoba-intercedes-in-toilet-fight-1.486626#.VCE_0Bacxfg