

Hundreds of people stake out plots for houses on empty land in Nelson Mandela Bay

Hundreds of people have moved onto land near KwaNobuhle in Kariega, staking out plots for houses.



Source: [Pexels](#)

They say the land, formerly used for vegetable farming, has been abandoned by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and has become a “hot crime spot” for rape, murder and dumping of stolen vehicles.

The occupation started on Saturday morning, 17 March 2024 and continued on Monday and Tuesday. The occupiers, some of whom are elderly, are clearing the land and burning weeds and have marked out plots with strips of plastic and planks. They say they will build shacks and move in with their families.

Xolani Booi said the land was a hot spot for crime. He said the dead body of a man had been found in the area two weeks ago. “Had there been people living here, there would have been no lost soul.”

At the moment Booi and his family live in someone else’s shack in Area 11 informal settlement, about 500 metres away. Area 11 was occupied in 2018 and attempts to evict residents were frozen by former mayor Mongameli Bobani. Residents named the area Bobani Village but now it is called Area 11.

Phakamisa Zinto said he was marking out spaces for his children. “When I heard people were marking plots on Saturday, I

said God is blessing my children at last,” said Zinto, whose adult children live with him in an RDP house. He said he would help his children with building materials for their shacks.

Thando Tshandu and his friend Mzwabantu Loro were digging out weeds.

Community voices clash

Tshandu said he lived in a backyard shack with his mother and aunt and his children. “There is no privacy, because we are seven in the yard. My kids are aged seven and 12. We need space.”

“This land can be used for development instead of leaving it to be used by criminals.”

Loro said people who walked to work in the factories nearby were often robbed. “We will put an end to that by staying here,” he said.

However, Nelson Mandela Bay Mayco Member for Human Settlements Thembinkosi Mafana said the occupation would be stopped.

“Two days ago, I asked the metro police to remove these plots. These are times when people think we will sympathise ahead of elections. How are we going to put services on land that is taken illegally?”

Municipal spokesperson Mamela Ndamase said the land was a flood plain which had previously been used for farming. She said the City would remove the pegs.

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