

Small retailers say malls killing their business

By [Colleen Goko](#)

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Small and family-owned retailers told [public hearings on Tuesday](#) of their struggle to conduct business in townships and rural areas, with national supermarket chains increasingly extending their reach into these previously underserved regions.



Gugulethu Square. Image credit: [Daily Voice](#)

Small and independent retailers took the stand as the grocery retail market inquiry, headed by Halton Cheadle, went into the second day of public hearings in Cape Town.

Thandi Kama, the owner of Skhoma Butchery in Gugulethu, said her business had nearly gone under since the establishment of Gugulethu Square. Its anchor tenants include Shoprite and Spar.

"We were promised that our business would be taken to the next level with the development of the mall. We were told we would have 5% ownership in the mall. We, along with other small businesses, had been trading in the area for more than 30 years. But when the development came, we were told we were not good enough," said Kama.



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The business that her father had built and established was forcibly demolished, Kama said. She had to go to court to get the business up and running.

"Our assets and property were destroyed. We had to force the developers to make space for us ... Shoprite and Spar had a lease agreement in place already and knew what their trading space would look like.

"My business was in place since 1985, but no one could tell me where I would be."

MJ Group founder Marcelino Julies said he had started his company in 2016 with a focus on the retail market.

The biggest challenge for township entrepreneurs was that the major retail companies had exclusive lease agreements with mall owners, he said.

Source: Business Day

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