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Block 1 Unit 125, 35 Island Circle, Riverhorse Valley

Tuesday, 23 January 2024

The South African Human Rights Commission  
136 Victoria Embankment  
Durban  
KwaZulu-Natal

**Complaint against eThekweni Municipality for continued water outages**

To whom it may concern,

I write to you in my capacity as the Leader of the Democratic Alliance in KwaZulu-Natal and as a Member of the Provincial Legislature.

Since the Floods in 2022, the water situation in the eThekweni Municipality, particularly in the North of Durban encompassing Phoenix, Tongaat, Durban North, Greenwood Park, Glenashley, Virginia, Sunningdale and Umhlanga has become progressively worse with each passing day.

While we understand that damage was caused by the floods of that year, the steps to mitigate water outages and plans to fix what was broken seem to have fallen short of its intended goal.

The residents of Bester have been without water for 14 years. The community of Tongaat which has been without water now for 90 days and counting. In Phoenix, water outages happen on a daily basis. In Durban North and Umhlanga, they were left without water for 8 days towards the end of 2023.

Our communities bear the brunt of these continued outages with no explanation from the eThekweni Municipality and almost no solutions to the problem.

It is understandable that the public have taken to burning tyres and blocking roads in a last-ditch attempt to gain the attention of the Mayor, City Manager and Deputy City Manager for Water and Sanitation. Unfortunately, they seem to care very little for the plight of the residents and have nothing to say in response to this crisis.



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Further to this, DA Ward Councillors who represent these communities are treated with contempt and disdain by municipal officials who often turn off their phones during outages leaving Councillors scrambling for answers that are not forthcoming.

Worse, DA Ward Councillors have had to resort to coordinating alternative means of water provision from private water tankers because the municipality only has 1 or 2 tankers per ward with a community of 20 000 people residing in each ward. This is an unthinkable situation.

In the Bill of Rights under Section 27, all South Africans are guaranteed access to water as well as the **“progressive realisation of each of these rights”**. There is nothing progressive, nor real about the ability to access water in eThekweni.

It is blatantly obvious then that the eThekweni Municipality is guilty of gross human rights violations for their failure to provide water to residents.

I therefore would submit to the South African Human Rights Commission that it is incumbent on you hold public hearings and investigate the situation in eThekweni, particularly in the North of the city and to hold the eThekweni Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government and National Government accountable for this terrible situation that is being inflicted upon residents.

Considering the gravity of the situation and the growing protests, I would request your urgent and immediate attention to this catastrophe.

Kind Regards

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