



## rural development & land reform

Department:  
Rural Development and Land Reform  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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### **MEDIA STATEMENT**

#### **SESHEGO LAND CLAIM COMMUNITY “SIT IN” AND OCCUPATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LAND REFORM OFFICES IN LIMPOPO, POLOKWANE.**

**DATE: 21 February 2019**

It has come to the attention of the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR), Maite Nkoana-Mashabane that on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2019, in the Polokwane Regional offices of the Department, transpired an unfortunate incident.

Elderly people were mobilised as part of the Seshego Land Claims Community to “sit-in” at the offices of DRDLR as part of a “protest” to demand additional land from the Department.

It is regrettable to note that our elderly people are abused and taken advantage of in this manner in the promise that they will get land from the Department.

The Minister has regrettably learned of further threats and abuses levelled at the officials of the Department putting their lives at risk. The Department was forced to shut down for two days as the members occupied the offices overnight.

The Minister is informed that the group is requesting that the Department allocate them more land over and above what they have since been allocated by the Department when the community raised their plight with the Department.

Minister of DRDLR would like to present the following facts to the South African community on this particular case:

- ❖ The members of the Seshego Land Claims Committee occupying the offices of the Limpopo Department of DRDLR in Polokwane, have never lodged a land claim during the opening of lodgement of land claims process that closed in 31 Dec 1998. Therefore, they are not claimants or beneficiaries of restitution. There is no land claim lodged by the Seshego Land Claim Committee in our records. The community cannot be assisted through the land claim process.
- ❖ Like many other prospective claimants, they have missed the cut-off date of 1998. They also refused to lodge a claim during the re-opening in 2014.
- ❖ The 1 500 members of the Seshego Land Claim Committee approached the Department and registered their plight for land to be made available for residential purposes to cater for families, individuals and communities.
- ❖ The Department is also not aware of any agreement between the Department and the Seshego land claim with regard to the acquisition of more land for the community.

“We are a caring government and Department, therefore cannot allow a situation where the plight of our elderly citizens is exploited”.

In 2013, the Seshego Land Claims Committee was subsequently granted 42 hectares under the Pro-Active Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) programme based on an understanding to address and redress the circumstances faced by the community at that point in time.

“The land is Portion 20 and 21 Jansenpark 1136 LS. This land cannot be sold as it is state property and was allocated to this community for residential purposes only. The members are not allowed to sell the land and any sale of that land is illegal,” says the Minister.

The Department views this act that has since transpired at the offices as grandstanding, an abuse and exploitation of the elderly by individuals advancing their own personal interests for personal gain and is strongly condemned.

The Department condemns with strongest term the illegal invasion of the offices and subsequent threatening of officials that has since brought the service delivery to a stand-still. We further reiterate the message that we are still open to engagement with the members of the Seshego Land Claims Committee, however proper procedures have to be followed to resolve any impasse with the Department.

The Department has systems and processes in place to attend to any complaint or dissatisfaction from beneficiaries or claimants in line with its mandate which finds reflection in the Restitution, Redistribution and Tenure reforms.

We appeal to our elderly to not allow themselves to be abused and should resort to proper ways to register their plight with the DRDLR or any other department.

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