

Legislature rejects motion to stop Pomfret relocation

6 May 2008

The motion by the Democratic Alliance (DA) in the North West province calling for government to stop the relocation of the people of Pomfret was rejected by members of the North West Provincial Legislature during its sitting today.

The Democratic Alliance claims that government threatens the Portuguese speaking people with closure of schools and is forcefully relocating people from Pomfret.

North West Premier Edna Molewa responded that the process of relocation is constitutional and within the parameters of the law. She said the DA has in the past lost a similar case in a court of law and that government will relocate people from Pomfret for them to be integrated in the broader society and access all government services like other citizens.

When the former 32 battalion soldiers were moved to Zeerust during the disbandment of the force, no one complained. Why now we have concerns while the Pomfret area threatens the health of people as it is contaminated by asbestos, said the Premier.

Premier Molewa says there is extensive evidence the people of Pomfret are in danger of asbestosis and it is the responsibility of government to see to it that people are provided with habitable accommodation in a healthy environment.

In addition, the Premier said this will allow the people of Pomfret to own their own houses as they are currently occupying properties belonging to the government.

Supporting the Premier, the MEC for Economic Development and Tourism, Darkey Africa also highlighted that the Democratic Alliance has all the means to access researched material pertaining to environmental and economic studies, so that they understand the seriousness of the situation in the area.

MEC Africa cited an example that families already relocated to Mafikeng are excited and appreciate what government has done for them now that their children could walk to the University and are able to receive services like all other citizens.

Residents are also happy that the provincial government has arranged schools for learners and that these learners were not negatively affected by the relocation.

Government reiterates that the people of Pomfret will be moved and integrated into different communities in the province with the respect and dignity they deserve.

Accordingly, the current developments in Mafikeng Extension 39, where some have already settled, dictate that there is no human relations challenge between the people of Pomfret and local residents or any form of resistance by the local people.

Enquiries:

Russel Mamabolo

Media Relations Director: North West Provincial Government

Tel: 018 387 3103

Cell: 082 900 6610

<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/2008/08050616451004.htm>