



rural development & land reform

Department:
Rural Development and Land Reform
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

CHIEF DIRECTORATE: Strategic Communications
Private Bag X833, Pretoria, 0001 Tel: 012 312 8532 Fax: 012 312 8066 Web: www.drdir.gov.za

CENTURION RESIDENTS HAVE NOTHING TO PANIC ABOUT OVER LAND CLAIMS

By Tshepo Diale

The Head of Ministry, Mr Mashile Mokono accompanied by the Acting Director-General (DG), Ms Rendani Sadiki, met with eNCA media to clarify the matter in respect of the Centurion land claim.

It was reiterated by Mr Mokono that Centurion residents have nothing to worry or panic about with regard to the land claim lodged by Mr Zulu Kleinbooie Mahlangu in respect of several properties located around Centurion (Rooihuiskraal, Olivenhoutbosch, the Reeds, Doornkloof and other suburbs) in the City of Tshwane.

“It needs to be put out very clear that in terms of the Restitution process; there is no one who should worry that their houses will be taken when there is a land claim lodged. Land Claim is a process through which the government is dealing with issues of redress. When there are houses or towns on it, no one should be worried at all because the law provides that the land claimants should be given alternative land or financial compensation,” said Mr Mokono.

“The practices have been in the past 20 years that we will pursue these options and, in some instances, they will be giving any other redress; so there is no need for any land owner or property owner in a build-up area to worry that they will take up their houses or they will take out businesses. It is not going to happen and there is no need for any agitation or fear at all,” further explained Mr Mokono.

He further more stated that the land claims are run by a statutory body called the Land Claims Commission. It reports to the Minister of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR), Ms Maite Nkoana-Mashabane,, but it is independent from the Department. It does its investigations and processes. “Last year in December we meet with the residents of Centurion just to explain the steps and processes in terms of the law to say we have received a land claim and we have been researching on it and these are our finding so far and be informed of what becomes the procedure moving forward,” explained Mr Mokono.

“However; we are aware now that, through Afriforum and other structures, there is that feeling that it is not enough to say the land will not be taken because it is our responsibility as government to continuously educate our people that where there is a land claim it is a legal requirement that does not cause social disruptions and to find alternative means and we will do the same here,” said Mokono.

“People should not waste their hard earned money on lawyers because there is no case to defend. There is no reason to go and protect yourselves because it is our responsibility as government to respect people’s rights and we respect the rights of property owners where land is not feasible to restore. So, there is no need for residents to look for lawyers because it is an unnecessary expense, it is actually going to be a waste of money,” urged Mokono.

"It needs to be stated clear that the Restitution of Land Rights Act is a law of government enacted to give redress for the wrongs of the past. Now, land claims are against the state because is the state that forcefully removed our people from and to various part of the land during the apartheid days. Now it is the same state that has an obligation to offer people compensation one way or the other," said Mr Mokono.

The Department has also committed to engage further with the residents of Centurion on the update of the land claims. "All property owners in the area of Centurion who are covered by this land claim, should remain assured that, as a responsible government, we will ensure that a just and equitable option to settle the land claims will be sought and their properties will not be affected at all; there is no need to be alarmed," concluded Mr Mokono.