



PRESS STATEMENT
24 August 2021

**TWENTY-ONE OCCUPIERS LEFT OUT IN THE COLD AFTER
ILLEGAL EVICTION BY THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN**



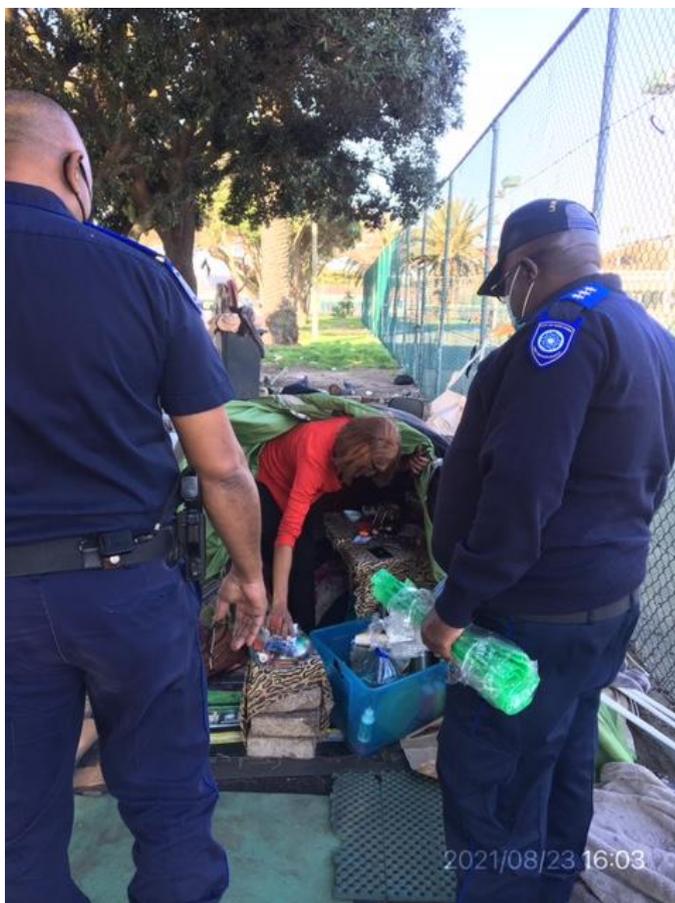
Caption: City of Cape Town law enforcement officers conducting the illegal eviction of vulnerable occupiers at the Green Point Tennis Court (23 August 2021). Photos by Annie Kirke.

Yesterday, twenty-one people who have been living in tents and informal structures on a piece of vacant land next to the Green Point Tennis Court for over a year were illegally evicted by law enforcement officers from the City of Cape Town. The illegal eviction and demolition of people's homes, which was conducted at the behest of Cape Town Mayor Dan Plato and in the presence of officials from the City's Social Development Department, left the vulnerable occupiers homeless and destitute. The illegal eviction occurred despite law enforcement officials being unable to produce a court order authorising the eviction of the occupiers' homes. This shocking act of brutality is in direct conflict with the Constitution and the Prevention of Illegal Eviction From and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act 19 of 1998 (PIE Act), which mandates that a court order considering all relevant circumstances must be

granted *before* an eviction can be executed, as well as a nation-wide moratorium on evictions imposed in response to the deadly COVID-19 pandemic in terms of the Disaster Management Act Regulations.

The occupiers, who are represented by the Ndifuna Ukwazi Law Centre, are in the process of approaching the Western Cape High Court on an urgent basis for an order directing the City to return their belongings.

During the inhumane eviction, law enforcement officers forced occupiers out of their homes and ordered them to remove their possessions before they dismantled tents, demolished homes and confiscated occupiers' personal belongings. Many occupiers lost personal effects, including identity documents, drivers' licenses, clinic and medication cards, without which they will be unable to access social support grants or obtain chronic medication. Some occupiers were physically and verbally assaulted by law enforcement officers, including one woman who was tackled to the ground and threatened with arrest after she asked an official to produce an eviction order.



Law enforcement officers also issued the occupiers with fines of R300, claiming that they were in contravention of the City's municipal [By-law relating to Streets, Public Places and the Prevention of Noise Nuisances](#) (2007). The by-law, which

makes it a crime for persons living on the street to conduct ordinary life-sustaining activities like sleeping, camping, resting, bathing, erecting a shelter or keeping personal belongings in public, is being [challenged in a different matter](#) by eleven people experiencing homelessness for its discriminatory impact and infringement of various constitutional rights.

Danielle Louw, attorney for the occupiers, said:

“The illegal eviction of occupiers from the Green Point Tennis Club is an inhumane and senseless act of brutality by the City of Cape Town. Many have suffered from evictions after losing their jobs, livelihoods, and homes as a result of the economic devastation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City’s illegal actions have left the occupiers destitute and without alternative accommodation. This forced displacement of vulnerable people, amidst the peak of Cape Town’s Third Wave of COVID-19 infections, exposes the City’s lack of sustainable solutions for dealing with people who experience homelessness.”

Contact:

- Daniellé Louw, Ndifuna Ukwazi Law Centre attorney: Danielle@nu.org.za / 072 957 9711
- Jonty Cogger, Ndifuna Ukwazi Law Centre attorney: Jonty@nu.org.za / 083 442 2136
- Yusrah Bardien, Ndifuna Ukwazi communications officer: Yusrah@nu.org.za / 082 470 1441

ENDS**ISSUED BY NDIFUNA UKWAZI**