

**PRESS RELEASE
8 DECEMBER 2021**



SAPS OFFICERS FACE THREAT OF EVICTION FROM SAFEHOUSES AS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SAPS INCREASES RENTAL BY OVER 1000%

The families of several South African Police Service (SAPS) members serving in the City of Cape Town are facing the threat of eviction from SAPS official housing and safehouses as SAPS and the national Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, who owns the housing, have imposed excessive rent increases on SAPS members living in these well-located areas. As everyone will be ushering in the new year, these police officers have been requested to vacate official housing provided by SAPS by 31 December 2021 or be subjected to an exorbitant rental increase of 1177%. Those who aren't able to pay these inflated rental amounts must urgently find alternative housing or face homelessness.

The affected SAPS members were moved to SAPS official housing and safehouses as a result of targeted attacks or threats on their lives, experienced in the performance of their duties fighting crime, and serving and protecting their communities. Some of the members have survived assassination attempts, while others have lost family members in coordinated attacks on their families, becoming collateral damage in the war against crime that these members fight daily under the employ of the Service. Should these members be required to return to the communities that pose a threat to their safety, they will most certainly fall victim to further attempts on their lives, their families' lives and personal integrity. According to threat analyses from the Crime Intelligence Unit, many of the affected officers continue to face high level threats against their and their families' lives.

A cautionary tale is that of Lieutenant Colonel Charl Kinnear who was

murdered in 2020, after SAPS left him vulnerable and exposed. According to an investigative report by the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID), SAPS largely ignored the threat against his life thereby effectively “[[throwing](#)] him to the wolves”. We do not want to see yet another instance where SAPS fails to take the necessary measures to protect their members against known threats at the expense of life. SAPS cannot continue to treat their members who have sacrificed their personal safety for their communities as if they are expendable.

South African police officers provide an integral service in our country and are an engine of fighting and combating crime towards a safer society, they are charged with a national responsibility of standing on the front lines of fighting crime and violence and keeping everyone safe - but today they find themselves at risk of being rendered homeless with their families, or at worst, losing their lives.

The rental increases come on the back of recommendations from the national Department of Public Works and Infrastructure - who owns the well-located official housing in and around the inner city - to obtain “market-related” rentals. In terms of these recommendations, SAPS members living in well-located safehouses have faced massive “market related” rental increases. This despite the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure Patricia de Lille’s assurances to redress the history of apartheid spatial planning in Cape Town. Cape Town remains in the midst of an affordable housing crisis that has been exacerbated by the economic fall-out of the COVID-19 pandemic. These members are being sacrificed at the altar of market related rentals and profits by virtue of serving (and living) in well-located areas. This exorbitant rental increase will be detrimental to the livelihood of SAPS members in lower income brackets, especially when the official housing is meant for lower ranks (lower than the rank of Lieutenant Colonel).

Luyanda Mtamzeli, a community organiser at Ndifuna Ukwazi, said: *“It is disappointing that the Minister of Public Work and Infrastructure Patricia De Lille has continuously claimed to advocate against spatial planning injustice and unlawful eviction but in contradiction to that claim, her department and SAPS are imposing astronomical rentals on SAPS Members. We call on the Minister to practice what she preaches and intervene in this matter.”*

On 9 December 2021, the families of affected SAPS members will picket outside SAPS Western Cape Provincial Office on 25 Alfred Street in Green Point to voice their concerns and to send a message that their breadwinners, fathers, mothers, sons and daughters are not expendable and that their safety should be prioritised. We invite all media houses as families of the affected SAPS members to a press briefing where family members will be sharing their stories

When: Thursday, 9 December 2021 at 12:00am

Where: Western Cape Provincial Head Office of South African Police Services
25 Alfred Street, Green Point, Cape Town, 8005

Contacts

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