

MEDIA RELEASE



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Department of Water Affairs and Forestry - Chief Directorate: Communication
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DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS & FORESTRY INTERVENES IN A PAYOUT DISPUTE IN THE FREE STATE

The Department of Water Affairs & Forestry is taking urgent measures to prevent a crisis in Qwaqwa, Free State, where its former employees are barricading the entrance to a water pump station. Their action has deprived several thousands of Phuthaditjaba residents and farmers in the neighbouring areas of clean water.

108 former departmental employees took severance packages two years ago when they were transferred to Sedibeng Water Board in terms of the department's restructuring programme. They allege that they have not been paid the pension portion of their package. This led the affected former employees to barricade the entrance to the pump station on Wednesday.

The Department's Regional Director in the Free State, Mr Nikisi Lefusi, immediately addressed the disgruntled group and undertook to do everything in his power to hasten the resolution of their payment. The Department is working to resolve the impasse as soon as possible and is meeting the National Treasury to ensure the speedy payments.

The department has committed itself to resolving the outstanding pension claims within the next eight weeks. Urgent steps are also underway to end the blockade of the pump station. The Department is working closely with Sedibeng Water to ensure that the matter is resolved as soon as possible.

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