

# MK vets: 'Invade more houses'

Flat-grabbers 'are not loose cannons'

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AS fears mount that Zimbabwean-style property invasions could soon take root in KZN, high-ranking ANC ex-combatants have urged those currently taking over houses in the province to step up the invasions. "The perception that those comrades currently invading municipal and other government housing projects are loose cannons acting without any mandate is wrong," Umkhonto We Sizwe Military Veterans (MKMVA) provincial chairperson Themba Mavundla said yesterday.

Ex-combatants illegally occupying units in housing projects in municipalities such as Msunduzi and Ray Nkonyeni in Margate, were doing so with the full support of the MKMVA leadership. "As leadership we have given them the green light to occupy those houses. We are urging our members from across the province to invade more houses in municipalities where they reside. Our members have been waiting since 2012 for government to provide them with houses as promised. We have told our members not to vacate the houses until government provides them with houses of their own," Mavundla said. In KwaZulu-Natal, MKMVA members, alongside military veterans from the Pan Africanist Congress's Azanian People's Liberation Army (Apla) and Azapo's Azanian National Liberation Army (Azanla), are currently occupying more than 200 units at the government-sponsored but privately-owned Aloe Ridge housing project in Westgate.

The ex-combatants have since spread their activities to the Masinenge housing development project in Margate, where they have taken over more than 100 houses. "As the leadership, we are aware of the operations of our members in both those projects and we urge them to continue with the occupations," Mavundla said. The illegal occupations, which coincided with the spate of land invasions currently taking place in other parts of the province as well as nationally, have been blamed on the ANC's recent adoption of the land expropriation without compensation policy. The ANC's intention to expropriate land without compensation became clearer when last month the party's MPs collaborated with those of the EFF to get the latter's motion for land expropriation without compensation passed by the National Assembly.

While the ANC has denied the invasions had anything to do with any of its policies adopted at its national conference, DA provincial spokesperson on community safety Rishigen Viranna was adamant the ruling party's stance on the land question was to blame. "The DA condemns the actions of the past few weeks in the strongest possible terms. Regrettably, they are the result of the passing of an ANC/EFF motion on land expropriation without compensation and are being fanned by racial populism. Particularly disturbing is that while President Cyril Ramaphosa claims that his ANC government does not support land invasions, some of those who are involved in such acts are from within the ANC's structures. "It is shocking that an ANC-linked organisation is stealing houses from the poorest of the poor," he

said. Virana has since written to acting provincial police commissioner Major General Bheki Langa, demanding that police clamp down on the invasions. Meanwhile, the provincial Human Settlement Department has revealed that a Rapid Response Task Team (RRTT) from the national department had been dispatched to Pietermaritzburg as part of efforts to resolve the Aloe Ridge debacle. “They will be negotiating with the war vets,” said Mbulelo Baloyi, spokesperson for the provincial department. A verification process has since revealed that some of the people illegally occupying Aloe Ridge housing units are not military veterans. We are urging our members from across the province to invade more houses in municipalities where they reside.”