

**Publication:** The Mercury  
**Title:** Land grabs continue despite court order  
**Publish date:** 04 March 2019

**Reach:** 25432  
**AVE:** R 14918.28  
**Author:** SE-ANNE RALL

■ CATO CREST

## Land grabs continue despite court order

SE-ANNE RALL

se-anne-koopman@nl.co.za

THE eThekweni Municipality has secured a final eviction order against land invaders who have been building on municipal land in Cato Crest.

However the order, granted on Friday in the Durban High Court, has done very little to ward off scores of people who are continuing to erect structures on the land alongside Mary Thipe Street.

In the past two weeks, at least 30 structures have been erected in ongoing land grabs.

According to eThekweni deputy mayor Fawzia Peer, the court order authorises the city's Land Invasion Unit to move in and break down structures. She said this also meant there was no need to have a sheriff of the court issuing notices and there was no waiting period to demolish the structures.

Peer said copies of the order were put up in the area, warning those building of the impending demolition.

A resident living in the neighbouring suburb of Manor Gardens said that on Friday and Saturday the area was relatively calm. However, by yesterday morning some people had returned.

"Yesterday morning, there were a few people in the area and they were still building," she said.

Peer said those continuing to build were acting in contempt of the order.

At a meeting held last week, residents expressed their anger at the ongoing land invasions. They complained of having to deal with fires on a daily basis and of little to no assistance from police.

Peer, who was at the meeting, said they met with both the SAPS and metro police who promised to step up patrols in the area.

Peer implored leaders of political parties to campaign reasonably, adding that the invasions were spurred by political parties in the lead-up to the coming elections.

"We denounce this irresponsible leadership and we urge people not to heed such calls as they lead to lawlessness in the city."

President of shack-dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo, S'bu Zikode, distanced his organisation from the ongoing land invasions.

"We are a membership-based association and our members have cards. While we do have members from Cato Crest, this does not include the new people who have come in. We take responsibility for our actions, but we are not part of what is going on here," he said.

KwaZulu-Natal Human Settlements MEC Ravi Pillay, who also addressed the meeting, said there was a project in Cato Crest to build 1500 units and only 1 024 were built. The remainder could not be built due to the rate of invasions.

He said at least 20% of people living in informal settlements were renting from someone else.

"Another 40% paid for the site on which they built their shack. That means 60% of these people are linked to an economic cycle. In our assessment, these are the drivers of invasions. There are landlords and agents selling these plots and some can go for R1 500, while others can sell for up to R8000." He said this issue needed to be addressed.

Pillay called for a forum to be set up, through which lines of communication could be established between the community and necessary law enforcement officials.