
Wednesday 19th August 2020

To: The Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs
Adv. BT Bongo, MP

Dear Adv. BT Bongo

Briefing and progress update by the City of Cape Town on the situation of migrants during the COVID 19 lockdown including the removal and integration of the protesting refugees at the Green Market Square in Cape Town.

The above matter and your letter of 31 July 2020 refers.

I note the request that I must brief the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs on 1 September 2020 on the resolution of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs of 10th March 2020, more in particular on the aspect of their reintegration into existing communities.

At the outset, I affirm the City's position that it is always willing to engage and co-operate in good faith and mutual trust with other spheres of government, as per the prescripts of the Constitution. I am however of the view that the resolution of March 2020 where the portfolio committee requested the City and the Department of Home Affairs to advise on a way forward in relation to the refugees within one month has been overtaken by subsequent events. At the time when the resolution was made the refugees were still occupying the Methodist Church. A national state of disaster was declared on 26 March 2020, which impacted on the group of refugees who were removed from the Church by SAPS and those occupying Albertus Street by the City. The refugees are currently in occupation at the Sites, Wingfield and Paint City that were identified as per Regulation 10 of the Disaster Management Regulations.

Planning of an exit strategy is currently coordinated by the SAPS COVID-19 PROV JOC.

The Following parties form part of this strategy:

- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Social Development
- Department of Health
- Department of Education
- South African Police
- South African Human Rights Commission
- City of Cape Town
- UNHCR
- Synergy Works
- Other NGO's

The most recent meeting was held on 5 August 2020.

The City is participating in the process in relation to the reintegration of the foreign nationals. The City's participation in this process is guided by its Constitutional mandate and applicable legislation.

A draft exit plan was developed by Ghalib Galant of Synergy Works who is working as a facilitator. Mr Galant formed part of the stakeholders that was initially involved during the process of engagement with the refugees since they occupied the Green Market Square during October / November 2019. It is my understanding that Mr Galant volunteered to assist with the draft of an exit plan.

This draft plan is a working document and no agreement has yet been reached on the contents thereof. It is therefore not ready to be tabled at the next Portfolio Committee meeting.

I suggest that the plan only be tabled once all parties are in agreement with the contents especially the roles and responsibilities attributed to each of the stakeholders and that the SAPS Provincial COVID-19 JOC be responsible for the presentation of the plan as they have managed the process to date.

Please note that I will not be available to attend the Portfolio Committee meeting as scheduled for 1 September 2020, due to prior commitments. Please accept my apology in this regard.

Should the meeting still proceed, an official from the City will be available to address the Portfolio Committee on the current process, should same be necessary.

We trust that this is in order and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



ALDERMAN DAN PLATO
EXECUTIVE MAYOR