

ETHEMBENI | WE ARE CITIZENS TOO

00:06 - INTRO

On Monday 17 August 2020, a sewage pipe burst in eNkanini, Khayelitsha. Dirty water ran into eThembeni settlement and created a dam.

Homes were flooded. Residents have been forced to live in the sewage for the past 72 days.

00:26 - NYAMEKA MANTAMBO

There was a drain that burst.
It came all the way from eNkanini...
all the way from up there.

00:33 - NONYAMEKO NKONONKONO

We are living here in this sewage with these kids,
these are kids they are young.
They don't know that this is sewage.
When it is hot like this
they want to go and swim in it.

00:42 - BAFANA MGOGODLANA

We went to the City of Cape Town several times.
We first went to our community leader, Blacks.
He then said that he had called the City and
that they didn't want to hear anything.

00:53 – BUHLE BOOI

What we are saying is that,
they must attend to this matter because they
have an obligation as the City of Cape Town,
as a municipality they have to
provide services to people.
And they are saying, "No, we can't. We can't help,
because this is an unlawful occupation."

01:10 - KHOLISWA MPENGU

It changed everything.
I ended up being homeless.
My furniture and things got messed up,
and my food was swimming
in this sewage water.

01:19 - NONYAMEKO NKONONKONO

Whoever says that,
that over there is water,
even if they are from the
City of Cape Town or any other department,
must bring a jug and scoop some.
If they drink it,
we will know that this is only water
and not sewage water and we will
leave the City of Cape Town alone.

01:34 – BUHLE BOOI

We see this as a tactic to try to force people out of the area.
We call it a constructive eviction.
It is where the landlord or the owner of the property would make living conditions unbearable, so that you will leave voluntarily out of the area, because it's not providing them with municipal services.

01:52 - KHLISWA MPENGU

It really hurts me. I feel like we are not part of the City of Cape Town.
The government doesn't care about us.
They only care about some people, whereas they were supposed to care about us people living in water with shit.

02:05 - NONYAMEKO NKONONKONO

So, tell us, are we still citizens?
Because sometimes it feels like there's a Republic of Cape Town and the Republic of South Africa.

02:15 – END SLIDES

With the help of civil society groups, eThembeni residents contracted an independent service provider to remove some of the sewage water, but heavy rains limited the project's impact.

By Wednesday 28 October 2020, residents were still living in sewage — more than two months after the first pipe burst at eNkanini.

"The City emphasises with residents, but unfortunately in this incidence, people have settled in a water detention pond...the City warned people not to settle here as the pond is designed to catch the excess water after rain and then drain it to the ocean.

It is designed to catch water and not for human habitation...while the pond was dry at the time of initial occupation, early in the lockdown period this year, it filled with water when the rains came...the City cannot be expected to pump out a pond that is not earmarked for human settlement at extreme cost every time it rains...deploying the specialised equipment that would be necessary to drain a pond of water that is engineered to hold, would not be feasible or sustainable.

Malusi Boo, Mayoral Committee Member for Human Settlements and Alderman Xanthea Limberg, Mayoral Committee Member for Water and Waste

For the City of Cape Town's full responses, visit www.bhekisia.org or ehwoza.com.