



More than 1 000 Abahlali baseMjondolo shack dwellers marched to the City Hall yesterday to hand a memorandum demanding an end to land evictions to eThekweni Municipality mayor Zandile Gumede.

PICTURE BONGANI MBATHA

Abahlali march for services, end to evictions

Thami Magubane

AB AHLALI baseMjondolo launched a scathing attack against eThekweni mayor Zandile Gumede, labelling her a disappointment during a march to the City Hall yesterday. They blamed her administration for violence against their members.

They accused her administration of presiding over the death of its members saying "bodies were piling up" under her leadership.

Two people have lost their lives, 2-year-old Jayden Khoza, who died of suspected teargas inhalation a few weeks ago and Samuel Hloele, who was shot dead during land evictions. The movement blames metro

police for the shooting.

The group, who marched from Curries Fountain to the City Hall yesterday to deliver a memorandum detailing their grievances, tried to storm the building after becoming impatient waiting for the mayor or her representatives.

Abahlali baseMjondolo leader S'bu Zikode called for marchers to invade City Hall. "We are going in there to get the mayor ourselves," he said as his members surged forward.

The police had to move quickly to close the only open door and police reinforcements were summoned.

"I called on the people to enter City Hall because we felt that the mayor was disre-

specting us and we have finally had enough. They look down on us, they see us as useless people with no brains," Zikode told *The Mercury*.

"She attended several meetings of Abahlali, where she made several promises. A while ago (while she was campaigning to be the mayor) she came to our meeting and promised that her administration would do things differently from the previous administration. We are very shocked that not even 10 months into her administration, two people were killed," said Zikode.

Thulani Zondi of Cato Manor said that members were tired of their needs being ignored.

"We have closed roads in

the past but it's clear that has not worked and we need to do something serious to get our grievances across," Zondi said.

In its memorandum, the group demanded an end to evictions and for the mayor to treat its members with respect and dignity.

They claimed they were excluded from the City's Integrated Development Plan and job opportunities, and demanded an update on the status of informal settlements and corruption investigations into the sale of RDP houses.

"We demand electricity and basic services," the memorandum said.

Mayoral spokesperson Mthunzi Gumede said the city had received the memoran-

dum and would respond appropriately.

Gumede said the mayor sent her condolences to the families of the deceased and that the city would comply with the SAPS investigation.

"At this stage it's not easy to speak on something that has not been completed.

"The mayor was elected based on the manifesto of the ANC and I have no doubt in my mind she will implement that," Gumede said.

Metro police spokesperson Sbonelo Mchunu said the unit was always blamed unfairly. "They said we killed the baby with tear gas. When it was revealed that we don't carry tear gas the allegations died a natural death."