

Desperate shack dwellers thwarted at gates of city hall



NO ENTRY: Abahli baseMjondolo members tried to force their way into the Durban City Hall yesterday. PICTURE: SIBONGISENI MAPHUMULO

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AN ATTEMPT to storm Durban City Hall by Abahlali baseMjondolo was thwarted by the police yesterday as the 2000 strong crowd demanded an audience with eThekweni mayor Zandile Gumede. It started as a peaceful march against the alleged violent conduct of the eThekweni Land Unit during evictions.

From the steps of the city hall Abahli president Sbu Zikode called on the shack dwellers to follow him inside the

heavily guarded closed off area.

“For too long now the mayor has lied to us and made empty promises. The Land Invasion Unit has no accountability. Nobody is acting against the corruption,” Zikode said.

Activist Desmond D’sa said when Gumede wanted their votes, the shack dwellers mattered and now they were being ignored. “Promises were made and now the time has come to deliver.”

Led by a number of blind shack dwellers and starting at Curries Fountain Stadium, the protesters from informal

settlements in areas such as Cato Crest, Clare Estate and Ntuzuma carrying banners calling for housing, dignity and respect marched through the CBD.

Zinhle Khuzwayo said they were fed up with being targeted by the police and Land Invasion Unit.

“On Sunday, we buried Samuel Hloele who was killed during an eviction last week in eMantsetseni. Before that it was two-week-old Jaden Khoza from Foreman Road informal settlement. We are tired of being killed by the police,” Khuzwayo said.

Police spokesperson Jay Naicker, said the post-mortem on Jaden had revealed that he had died of pneumonia.

Last month Jaden’s father, Receive Khoza, claimed the baby had died as a result of inhaling teargas fired by the police during a protest at the Clare Estate informal settlement.

Xolani Magwaza received the memorandum on behalf of Cogta.

Skhumbuzo Ndaba from the mayor’s office, said they would work on getting a quick response to the shack dwellers grievances.