

Minister meets with Western Cape fishing communities

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana on Sunday met various leaders from the Western Cape's fishing communities. The meeting was held in response to a memorandum handed over last Monday to the Fisheries Branch in Cape Town, according to a statement from the ministry. One of the demands in the memorandum was to meet with Zokwana within seven days of handing over the memorandum.



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Hangberg, Hout Bay has been the scene of violent protests, with fishing rights one of the main concerns of residents. Among the issues discussed were the slow progress with respect to transformation in the fisheries sector, communication between the department and the affected communities, an update on the "fish basket" allocated for small-scale fishermen and the demarcation in the nearshore, offshore and small-scale fisheries.

"The meeting agreed on peaceful and constructive dialogue and further agreed to establish working committees to address all issues raised on behalf of fishing communities. The meeting clarified issues that needed urgent attention, and issues that needed regular interaction between the department and the fishing community leaders," reads the statement.

"It was recognised by all affected that there are immediate concerns that need urgent attention."

This Monday, the fishing community will meet with the Deputy Director General of the Fisheries Branch, Siphokazi Ndudane.

"The meeting also agreed that investigations of cases wherein communities have been robbed of their fishing rights by big companies - deals like Foodcorp - must be done as a matter of urgency."

Zokwana has also committed to publishing a notification calling for nominations for the establishment of the Fisheries Transformation Council (FTC) by the end of September. This council will look comprehensively at transformation issues to ensure meaningful participation by all in our society.

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