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# MEDIA STATEMENT

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14 August 2019 (17h00)

## ILLEGAL LAND INVASION AND VIOLENCE ON THE N2 – STRAND, WESTERN CAPE

Land and access to land remains an emotional issue in South Africa. The continued illegal land grab attempts of ASLA property in the Strand, Cape Town continue.

During the past 2 weeks, a group of illegal land invaders, targeting ASLA property along the N2, calling themselves the Sinqaw'nqawu Camp have threatened to “send out a heavy message to ASLA” in a voice note sent to a local community newspaper. In the voice note, a threat is also made to ASLA’s attorney, who is warned to “think twice before saying anything in court on Thursday” (last week) on the land issue.

In addition, a letter of demand was delivered to the ASLA offices wherein the group demands that ASLA hand over its land to the group who have since 2 April 2019 repeatedly tried to occupy ASLA owned land along the N2 in the Strand. The letter openly threatens violence against innocent road users and states that the dire consequences will be against ASLA’s conscience and will never stop until their demands are met. This was also reflected on banners publicly displayed near the property.

ASLA abhors the blatant criminal behaviour with the resulting chaos and damage to property that ensued along the N2 through the Strand area during the previous and past weekends. These illegal acts negatively impact the whole economy of the Helderberg region of the City of Cape Town.

### **Legal Action and Status Quo**

ASLA, as private landowners, were confronted with the decision to file for an order prohibiting illegal land invasion and trespassing on 5 April 2019 due to the attempted invasion of the ASLA owned 8ha along the N2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2019. ASLA approached the High Court in Cape Town, and obtained an interim interdict prohibiting trespassing and the erection of structures on the ASLA land in question, adjoining the N2 National Road. The order further instructs the South African Police Service to enforce the order. On 23 May 2019 the High Court, by agreement, afforded the illegal invaders the

opportunity to state their case and provide answering affidavits by 25 July 2019. No answering affidavits were filed.

ASLA has incurred significant loss and damage in the process of protecting their property as a result of these illegal actions and will be seeking redress.

### **Land Ownership History and Context**

ASLA purchased land along the N2 in the late 1990's. This land was developed alongside land owned by the City of Cape Town in what is now known as Nomzamo and Asanda Village. Persons living on the land informally were all accommodated in these formal developments around 2004 following wide consultation. As in any development, land was set aside for non-residential purposes. The land next to the N2, owned by ASLA was initially intended for educational facilities. Education authorities declined the opportunity to purchase this land and it was re-zoned in a public process to a light industrial zoning category. It is, amongst others, this land that has been the target of illegal invaders, who have resorted to acts of destruction and violence since April this year and who have threatened to continue and intensify their illegal conduct, which apparently was aimed at users of the N2, unless ASLA simply hand over the land to them for free. It remains of paramount importance that all concerned acknowledge that the constitutional obligation to provide everyone with adequate housing rests with the State, who must strive to fulfil this obligation within its available resources.

ASLA regrets the inconvenience caused to the law-abiding citizens of the Helderberg and trust that the State will ensure that rule of law and the rights of private citizens and landowners, as enshrined in our constitution, will ultimately prevail. ASLA remains committed to the local community and economy and, as always, would welcome dialogue with the State and true leaders from the communities who are our neighbours.

Ends

Enquiries may be referred to :

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