

Hawkers hit Safa house

Published; May 12, 2010

Times Live, Sowetan website, law library website, The Citizen, I-Net website, The Star, SAPA

Hawkers protested outside Safa House in Soweto on Wednesday, saying they were struggling to survive after being evicted from Soccer City.

"Now that they have moved me away, I don't know what I am going to do. Where do I go?," asked Moffat Sebolelo, 48, who said he had been trading at the stadium for 20 years.

"I was selling food to the construction workers who were building Soccer City and I must tell you that I used to make a lot of money," he told Sapa.



He was one of about 100 informal traders who handed over a memorandum of grievances to SA Football Association official Mpho Thothela.

The traders from around Gauteng complained that they were being excluded from benefiting from the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup.

A guard working at Soccer City said the traders carrying placards tried to get into the venue but were not allowed to do so.

"We are under very strict instructions not to let these protesters into Soccer City," said the guard, who did not want to be named.

The group belonging to the SA Informal Traders Forum marched to Safa House next to Soccer City to hand over their memorandum.

Nokuthula Dladla, 45, has been trading at the stadium for twelve years.

She said that her seven children were suffering since the evictions.

"They are moving us further and further away, Fifa must give us a space inside. I don't even care about tickets, I just care about my family. What am I going to do at a soccer game? It's not going to give me any money.

"Four of my children travel to school and now I can't even afford to pay for their transport," she said.

The traders said they would wake up at 3.30am to make fresh food for the construction workers.

"They need to have their 'vetkoek' at 6am in the morning but now they can't eat that because we cannot afford to make it," Dladla said.

The traders are up in arms over not being able to sell their products at World Cup venues.

Some of them claim to have been evicted after being told that Fifa would not allow them to trade in certain area during the tournament.

They were demanding that a stop is put to forced removals.

Media coordinator Thabo Koole said that many of the workers who traded outside soccer city during its construction felt they were being left out.

"They feel that they provided food for most of the construction workers, they feel they should be rewarded as well."

Construction workers who helped build the new stadiums were rewarded with free tickets earlier this month.

The traders also wanted provision to be made by LOC for them to ensure that their trading zones were hygienic.

"They want tents to be put up by the LOC so that things can be in a hygienic condition."

The SA Informal Traders Forum is made up of 32 structures. The LOC has seven days to respond to the memo of grievances.

Forum chairman Sam Khasibe said he felt that they were welcomed and that if in seven days there was no response then there will be consequences.

"There will be more demonstrations, more picketing and more sit-ins. They must not forget us and that fact that we fed the construction workers daily, with our affordable prices... we must be given our space."

The City of Johannesburg recently said that traders who had been selling at stadiums for a long time would be allowed to do business from nearby tents.