

## Khayelitsha residents: Not in my yard

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Cape Town's plan to provide serviced plots for residents of the Monwabisi Park informal settlement and backyarders threatened by annual floods, has created an uproar among adjacent residents living in formal housing.

Residents of Khayelitsha's Ilitha Park have twice this year prevented contractors from installing basic services on the land as they believe the city's aim to provide serviced plots and allow beneficiaries to build their own structures, will result in a collection of neighbouring shacks that will devalue their properties.

Ilitha park resident Nozuko Roji said: "A person from squatter camps knows nothing about neatness. They're going to turn our backyard into a dumping site and we don't want that. We pay a bond for these houses, we deserve better. If I let them build their shacks here I would end up having stinking garbage next my house. The city must look for another place, not next to our houses."

Sanco in Ilitha Park is believed to be holding back the city's proposed development, though committee member Beauty Nontshakaza denies it.

"These are rumours. We didn't stop the development, the mayor of Cape Town did, because residents were not happy with it," said Nontshakaza.

However, the mayor's spokesperson, Rulleska Singh, and city human settlements head Ernest Sonnenberg both pointed to opposition by Sanco, as did Monwabisi Park residents' committee chairperson Thabo Gulwa.

"Sanco members from Ilitha Park are the ones who are closing this development. We had several meetings with them. They said they don't want shacks next to their houses," said Gulwa. If the city was unable to solve the stalemate, Monwabisi Park residents would "be forced to take action".

Some Monwabisi Park residents were threatening to build shacks on the land prior to the plots being serviced if the development did not move ahead, he said.

Sonnenberg said the land next to Ilitha Park was identified for Ilitha Park backyarders requiring flood relief, as well as for the relocation of Monwabisi Park informal settlement residents.

Ilitha Park residents had twice denied the contractor access to the site.

Continual negotiations, involving 15 meetings over the past nine months, had been held, said Sonnenberg, and all parties except the Ilitha Park Sanco were in agreement. – West Cape News