

ANC CALLS FOR JUSTICE AGAINST RIOTERS

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The African National Congress (ANC) in the Fezile Dabu region has called for justice to take its course against the illegal rioters who went to the Metsimaholo Local Municipality's offices in Sasolburg last week Friday, to remove the municipality's executive mayor, Brutus Mahlaku.

The rebel rousers have accused Mahlaku of corruption despite having already opened a case against him. The ANC, on the other hand, said it was time for the criminals to face the full might of the law for failing to follow the right channels in raising their grievances against the mayor and his council.

According to the ANC statement, the rogue young people who were the instigators of the march two weeks ago embarrassed the organisation and its leadership.

Meanwhile the 16 accused individuals that were part of the illegal gathering have appeared before the local magistrate court. They all stand accused of participating in an illegal gathering with the intention to commit crime, following their dissatisfaction over the response of the Metsimaholo Local Municipality to the grievances brought to the municipality by the brogue leaders of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL).

Fifteen of them were released on R1 000 bail with a condition to report to the local police station daily and to desist from further participation in illegal protests. The 16th suspect will be kept behind bars pending the finalisation of an on-going assault case against him.

The police spokesperson, Constable Peter Kareli, said police were satisfied with the strict bail conditions given to the suspects.

"You will remember that the police vehicle was vandalised and it means they were up for fight. We are going to help the prosecution build a strong case against the suspects because we all know what were the results of an illegal gathering in our area two months back. They have violated the gathering act and this case is treated seriously given what happened in the past."

Kareli said the rioters got arrested when they started to burn tyres, with the intention to physically remove the mayor from the building. He said police were stoned and forced to retaliate in order to contain the crowd.

"You will recall what the community of Zamdela did during the past protest, they this again engaged in an illegal march allegedly to forcefully remove the mayor of Metsimaholo Local Municipality and the councillors. Protestors were advised by the public order police to disperse as the gathering was not approved and it was illegal, but they decided to ignore the call from the police."

"Police had to move in on the singing group of protestors and managed to arrest four people from the group and we arrested others later. All problems started and as they were running away from the police. Small groups started to mushroom around corners throughout Zamdela, burning tires and throwing stones at police vehicles. Water cannons were used to disperse the groups as well as rubber bullets."

The Weekly can report that the accused tried to cause noise in court after they informed about their bail conditions. Sam Bulwane, who opened the case against Mahlaku as the leader of the ANCYL and Shoes Radebe were in court to support the arrested protestors.

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Bulwane is part of the leaders who were encouraging the residents of Amelia to organise a march that is aimed at defaming Mahlaku.

The case was postponed until May 20 for further investigation. The accused were warned that they face a possible jail term, especially those currently who have criminal records, and a hefty fine to the first time offenders.

The police continued to patrol the township after the suspects' court appearance.

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]