



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

**REPRIEVE FOR LIMPOPO COMMUNITY:
MUNICIPALITY AGREES TO PROVIDE INTERIM WATER SUPPLY**

The Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) represents five villages, which have not had access to water since 2009. The Sekhukhune District Municipality (“District Municipality”) terminated the water supply through the existing infrastructure to Elandskraal, Morarela, Mbuzini, Dichoeng and Tsansabela villages. They only supplied the communities with water once or twice a week after constructing a new water plant in the area.

The communities comprise mainly of children, elderly men and women who are forced to walk long distances to collect water. As a result of the termination of water supply, community members collect water from crocodile-infested rivers, and springs shared with animals. This puts women’s safety in particular at risk. Lack of water supply also impacts on sanitation facilities and girl children are, for example, often unable to attend school while menstruating.

CALS instituted an application in the North Gauteng High Court on a semi-urgent basis for water supply to be returned. The District Municipality opposed the application, which was heard yesterday. Settlement of the matter was reached and the Municipality will have to supply the villages with water in the interim.

As part of the settlement, parties have agreed that potable water will be trucked into the villages twice a week. The District Municipality will supply water via rotational system on Thursdays and Fridays. The order will be implemented within 14 days of the court order. The second part of the application, which deals with the constitutionality of the Municipality’s policies and the steps they have taken will be heard at a later stage.

“Clients are pleased with the interim relief, but wait with anticipation for adequate water supply through proper infrastructure every day,” said Zeenat Sujee, attorney at CALS. “It has been a long wait and we are satisfied that the settlement will alleviate the suffering of the community for now.”

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