

Soshanguve 'instigators' suspended over destruction of property

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Mpho Raborife, News24

Johannesburg - The City of Tshwane has suspended a handful of people they believe instigated the destruction of government property during a protest at the Soshanguve municipal offices, north of Pretoria, on Thursday.

"We have identified the instigators of today's violent protest and the destruction of council and private property, and have served them with letters of suspension as employees of the Vat Alles programme," the city said in a statement.

The workers would also face criminal charges.

"We confirm that no employee has been served with any termination notice as most of the employees have indicated their willingness to return to work."

Five municipal vehicles and a guardroom were burnt on Thursday morning at the municipal offices by Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) employees who are unhappy about payments from the municipality. Vat Alles is part of the EPWP.

One Tshwane Metro Police Department car's windows were also damaged. The rest of the vehicles belonging to the city were stoned and moved to another depot for safekeeping.

Four Tshwane Metro Police Department cars had been monitoring the entrances to the offices.

Gauteng police spokesperson Captain Matthews Nkoadi said police were alerted at 08:00.

People from Block F were allegedly burning tyres and barricading roads leading to the offices, he said.

The workers were demanding to be permanently employed by the city. They also wanted their docked stipends from the past two months paid to them. This was despite the fact that these were withheld due to absenteeism on numerous occasions, the city said.

Mayor Kgosientsho Ramokgopa assigned Roads and Transport Member of the Mayoral Committee George Matjila to continue talks with the group.

"We noted that the majority of the Vat Alles brigade have committed to return to work under the same employment conditions," the city said. However a select group was still intimidating the workers, it said.

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