

New documentary shines light on Kalk Bay fishing community's 'stolen heritage'

Greenpeace Africa recently shared a teaser for its upcoming documentary *Gutted* which amplifies the voices of small-scale fishers in the Kalk Bay fishing community who are battling for fishing permits. This while industrial fishing companies continue to deplete the country's marine resources, the organisation said.



Image source: www.pixabay.com

The online documentary explores how laws favouring the industrialisation of fishing in South Africa have not only changed the socioeconomic situation of these communities, but also, the once vibrant and community-centric culture.

“They say you mustn’t lose your culture; but the way that things have gone, they’ve taken Kalk Bay’s culture away. They took away fishing,” said Moegamat Alie Fortune, an 85-year-old, fourth-generation fishermen from Kalk Bay.

Ferial Davids, who cleans fish at the Kalk Bay fish market, said that there has been a drastic decline in the number of fish local fishers are bringing in. She suspects that it is a result of trawling along the Western Cape coastline.

“It’s not a lot of fish around now lately. I suppose it’s because of the big trawlers that are around. There used to be hundreds and hundreds of snoeks here on the harbour; but nowadays, it’s like ten snoek, 20 snoek, not even a hundred snoek for the day,” she said.

Illegal fishing activities

Gutted explores the trickle-down effect of industrial fishing which has led to many of these coastal communities having to engage in illegal fishing activities because they do not have permits to fish legally. This had tainted perceptions of local fishers, swaying local support, and further marginalising them.

“You will find that over a period of 30 years, the community is involved in these illegal activities, and they are criminalised based on the law that does not allow them to access the [fish] in the area that they are living in,” said Professor Moenieba Isaacs, academic coordinator at the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape.

The documentary, which will go live on Greenpeace Africa’s YouTube channel at the end of the month, is the first of a series of short documentaries that the organisation has produced in the build up to its ship, the Arctic Sunrise, docking in Cape Town. The ship’s arrival in South Africa is part of the organisation’s international ocean sanctuaries campaign, urging the United Nations to protect a third of the world’s oceans.

Supporters are encouraged to sign the [#ProtectTheOceans petition](#) for updates about the ship tour, and the documentary launch.

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