

SAPS housing project draws political scrutiny in Western Cape



By [Katja Hamilton](#)

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Over the past six years, SAPS, in collaboration with corporate entities, has embarked on constructing and gifting homes to those ravaged by the very crimes they fight against.



Source: [Pexels](#)

This endeavour has stirred opposition by political figures in the Western Cape who argue that SAPS' mandate should strictly centre on combating crime rather than delving into the realm of social welfare.

Amidst the backdrop of a relentless battle against crime in the Western Cape, the resistance to the project came to a head on Monday, 26 February - Police Day - when Minister of Police of South Africa Bheki Cele handed over a home in Delft to a 22-year old woman, Sisanda Vokwana, living with her 17-year old brother.

The Vokwana pair are the sixth recipients in South Africa to reap the rewards of this initiative, stemming from SAPS' National Excellence Awards legacy.

Sponsors of the programme include Old Mutual, Metropolitan, Assupol, Gift of the Givers, Homechoice, Blue Label Telecoms, Community Policing Forum, the SAPS Western Cape's Women's Network and Men for Change.

"The Vokwana orphans will now have a decent roof over their heads. We hope to do more as the police with our social partners, who continue to ensure we change the lives of victims of crime and those destitute," Cele said.

This project, touted as improving relations between police and the communities, has, however, been posited as nothing but campaigning.

Housing project criticism

DA provincial leader Tertuis Simmens expressed his concern, stating that it is highly unusual for the Minister of Police to be involved in the delivery of houses to the vulnerable in communities.

He stressed that SAPS is not a private corporate entity with a corporate social responsibility.

"It is not the police's role to provide housing... The spend on housing sounds irregular and the timing is suspicious.

"It can therefore be nothing more than blatant electioneering and exploiting the real needs of poor communities for cheap political points," he said.

Crime rates soar

Delft residents say little has been done to change the situation of violence and crime in their community.

Candice van der Rheede, a Delft community worker said, "We are still just statistics to SAPS... we have one police station servicing such a large community and the police officer to resident ratio is disgusting."

In November 2023, Cele, alongside Major-General Norman Sekhukhune, released the quarterly crime statistics showing that Delft Police Station recorded the highest increase in the country.

Delft was listed as the top murder station, recording 80 murders in just three months, between July and September 2023.

ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

Katja is the Finance, Property and Healthcare Editor at Bizcommunity.

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