

WaterCan lays criminal complaint against CoJ for ongoing sewage pollution

The Water Community Action Network (WaterCan) has laid a criminal complaint against the City of Johannesburg (CoJ), former acting municipal manager Bryne Maduka, and recently appointed municipal manager Floyd Brink over their alleged failure to address the sewage flowing into the Klip River.



Source: Akhararat Wathanasing © [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

According to WaterCan, an Outa initiative, the generator at the Goudkoppies Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW) broke down in April last year, and sewage inflow had to be rerouted to the nearby Bushkoppies WWTW during power cuts. Less than two weeks later, cable theft at Goudkoppies meant that all inflow was rerouted to Bushkoppies, which it says does not have the capacity to cope with the extra flow.

Despite [a directive from the Gauteng Department of Water and Sanitation \(DWS\) to CoJ](#), Goudkoppies inflow is still being rerouted to Bushkoppies, says WaterCan. Raw sewage is spilling into the Harringtonspruit and from there flowing into the Klip River and, ultimately, the Vaal River, it says.

Both WWTWs are managed by CoJ through its entity Johannesburg Water.

“Sewage pollution is killing our river ecosystems. South Africa is a water-scarce country, and such high levels of pollution are completely criminal. It is time to hold people accountable for not doing their jobs. Polluting water is a violation of basic rights, including the right to health,” says Dr Ferrial Adam, executive manager for WaterCan.



Load shedding hampering efficiency, effectiveness of waste management sector

21 Jul 2023



Directive issued to correct non-compliance

DWS issued the directive to CoJ in August 2022, ordering Maduka, acting city manager at the time, to stop the pollution immediately and clean up, to provide an action plan to correct non-compliance within seven working days, to appoint an environmental expert to compile a rehabilitation plan within 30 days, and to implement the full rehabilitation plan with 30 days of DWS approving that plan.

Despite this, inspections conducted by DWS on 23 February 2023 at Bushkoppies and on 1 March 2023 at the nearby Goudkoppies in Riversdale showed no improvement. WaterCan obtained copies of the DWS directive and reports on site visits through a request for information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA).

“Section 19 and 20 of the National Water Act deals with prevention and remedying the effects of pollution, and that is our basis for laying the criminal charges against CoJ. The failure to comply with the directive constitutes a criminal offence in terms of Section 151 of the Act and, as such, CoJ and the municipal manager should be held to account in accordance with the criminal justice system,” says Asavela Kakaza, Outa’s legal project manager.



Cholera outbreak claims four lives in Free State, death toll reaches 47

6 Jul 2023



High E. coli count in the Klip River

Earlier this month, WaterCan conducted laboratory tests in Eikenhof, and a high E. coli count of 101,000 CFU/100ml was found in the Klip River, which has been at the centre of recent cholera cases in Johannesburg.

“We hope that the investigation is swift, and that those accountable for the sewerage pollution will face the full might of the law.”

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