

THE PLIGHT OF REFUGEE TENANTS / FOREIGN NATIONALS IN SOUTH AFRICA TELLS A SAD STORY

Fact File

DRUMMOND HOUSE

19 Fisher Street, Durban

Landlord: SoHigh Investments,
Represented by Dr Rikesh Maharaj;
attorney: Anesh Maharaj

Tenants' Profile

Analysis of OCR's Drummond House Survey: April 2006

Total Number of Households: 44

Total number responded: 42

Average No. of people per flat: **5.4**

Total number of occupants: **228**

No. of Children: **100**

No. of Adults – female: **65**

No. of Adults – male: **63**

Period of Occupation:

17 households are in occupation for between 7-16 years; 6 for up to 2 years; 19 between 4 - 6 years

Rental paid per month:

1 household pays R1600.00; 1: R450.00; 1: R750.00; 16: R1350.00; 23: R1450.00

No. of children at school / tertiary institutions: 90

The different grade attended by learners:

11 attend Crèche; 2 in Grade R; 59 in Grade 1-7 & 13 in Grade 8; Tertiary: 5

Size of flats: 13 occupy a 1 bedroom, 28: 2 bedrooms; 1: 2.5 bedroom

Head of Household:

South African Citizens: **19**

Foreign Nationals: **23**

Foreign Nationals:

Zairians:1; Congolese:17; Rwandans:2; Angolans: 2; Burundians:1

THE MERCURY Friday June 2 2006

Tenants fight eviction order claiming they need more time

BRONWYN GERRETSEN

MORE than 100 people, including refugees, foreign nationals and South African citizens, face eviction from their Durban homes today because new landlords have instructed them to vacate their flats.

However, the tenants of Drummond House, in Fisher Street in the Point area, insist they cannot vacate the building immediately as they have no alternative accommodation.

Michael Kandolo, 27, a tenants' representative and a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo who lives in the building with his parents, said the tenants were not refusing to move out of the building, but required more time to find alternative accommodation.

"We are not refusing to vacate, we are just asking for some time, like about six months, to find another place to stay. We are just asking for some understanding," he said.

Kandolo said relocating was difficult because many families had children at school and therefore needed to find accommodation nearby.

More than 30 rooms in the build-

ing, with an average of five people a room, are still occupied.

Kandolo said the tenants had received a notice on February 26 to vacate their homes by the end of March. However, they were legally informed that they did not have to do so, he said.

The tenants sought advice from the Organisation for Civic Rights, which held meetings with the tenants' representatives and the landlords to come to an agreement. However, no agreement was reached.

Anesh Maharaj, of Anesh Maharaj Attorneys, which is acting for Drummond House, said an application would be made in the high court for an ejection order if the tenants failed to vacate the building by today.

"I believe they have been given enough notice and if you had to see the condition of the building it would become evident that it is in need of improvement," he said.

Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed, Chairman of the Organisation for Civic Rights, said refugees and foreign nationals had realised that there was "very little or no security of tenure" for them as tenants.

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