



## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**18 AUGUST 2022**

### **ARREST OF FUTULULU INVADERS WITHIN THE iSIMANGALISO WETLAND PARK WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority welcomes the move by the South African Police Service (SAPS) of arresting people who were invading a protected area known as Futululu forest which is a state land managed by iSimangaliso Wetland Park on 16 August 2022. This comes after the recent unlawful incidents of invasion which started around the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 where a group of people unlawfully invaded the Futululu forest demanding the land for farming purposes and some stands being sold for residential purposes. SAPS was called and a large number of people estimated to be about 71 were arrested on this incident.

The first wave of illegal invasion started on 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2022 when approximately 100 people invaded the Futululu forest using the access point opposite the entrance of the South African Defence Force (SANDF) base known as 121 Battalion. The number of the invaders kept growing and was estimated to be about 300 people at some point. iSimangaliso brought the application to the Pietermaritzburg High Court seeking court intervention as efforts to engage the community and the invaders through dialogue and meetings were not yielding positive results as some community members continued with the invasion and destroying park infrastructure.

The Pietermaritzburg High Court granted an interim interdict on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 2022 which stated that “the respondents and anyone acting through or with the respondents are interdicted from entering or invading, occupying and/or removing any vegetation and/or erecting any structures on the area known as the Futululu”.

Subsequently on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2022, the Court handed down the final court order which ordered that the respondents cited in the order, and anyone acting through or with them are interdicted from entering or invading, occupying and / or removing any vegetation and / or erecting any structures on the area known as the Futululu Forest,

within the iSimangaliso Wetland Park, save with the permission of the iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority.

iSimangaliso would like to express its disappointment that despite the instruction of the court there are some elements of the community who have decided to again embark on unlawful activities and trespassing while the engagement with communities is still in progress . Since the start of these unlawful activities, the Park Authority has held several meetings with community leaders in an attempt to find an amicable solution. Meetings involved structures such as the leadership of the Traditional Authority, municipal ward councillors, land claimants' leadership, Dukuduku re-settlement trust committee, farmers' representatives, and representatives from People and Parks structure, amongst others.

iSimangaliso would like to warn members of the public not to be lured into buying stands and trespassing into Futululu forest as such action will be in contravention of the Pietermaritzburg High Court order and may lead to an arrest.

End

**Statement issued by iSimangaliso Wetland Park Authority**

**Media enquires**

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