

DOWN TO THE WIRE FOR DELIVERY



IN AGONY: A woman screams after being injured by razor wire. Police opened fire with rubber bullets on angry residents of Orange Farm who were protesting against poor service delivery. **PICTURES: CHRIS COLLINGRIDGE**

Orange Farm demo turns ugly as protesters clash with police

BY LEBOGANG SEALE

Thick smoke billowed into the air. The sound of rubber bullets reverberated and people screamed hysterically as they scattered in different directions. Blood flowed on the tar.

This was the scene – reminiscent of apartheid-era South Africa – in Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg, yesterday when police used rubber bullets to disperse a crowd of protesters who had barricaded both sides of the Golden Highway.

At least four protesters, including three women, sustained serious injuries, bringing to eight the number injured since early yesterday morning.

Waving a large placard reading “10 years of freedom without water, sewerage, electricity – SA f*** democracy” and chanting revolutionary slogans, the irate protesters toyi-toyed along the highway,

which had been barricaded with large iron sheeting, burning tyres, rocks and tins. A heavy contingent of police officers kept close watch.

Earlier in the morning, metro police spokesperson Wayne Minnaar had described the situation as “volatile”.

Senior metro police and SAPS members tried to negotiate with the protesters, asking them to move off the road.

However, the residents, who were joined by schoolchildren, remained defiant.

When officials from the Joburg council tried to address the crowd, they were pelted with stones. Police reacted by firing rubber bullets in an attempt to disperse the crowd.

When one of the councillors, Kedibone Simango, arrived under heavy police guard, tensions boiled over, with the protesting residents booing her even before she could address them.

She was finally able to speak from an armoured vehicle, but protesters continued to hurl abuse at her as she battled to convince them that some of their demands would be met by next month.

The defiant crowd had by then swelled to more than 500. No sooner had the councillor been whisked away, when mayhem again broke out, with police shooting indiscriminately into the crowd.

One woman lay writhing in pain as she bled profusely from a rubber-bullet wound to the back of her head.

Some residents threatened to block the adjacent N1 freeway between Johannesburg and Bloemfontein.

“We will continue to block the road because the local municipality is not serious about addressing our problems. We need water, electricity, houses, and toilets,” said Janet Setshedi, who lives in Ward 4, Orange Farm.

Maria Nkomane, from Ward 6, complained that her area had always been overlooked in the provision of basic services.

“We’ve been told that we are on the waiting list for (low cost) houses since 1996. We are tired of watching our people dying from shack fires and floods,” she said.

Bricks Mokolo, an organiser for the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee, said most councillors in the area had failed to deliver in the critical areas of education, health and sanitation, and housing infrastructural development”.

By late yesterday, order had been restored, with traffic running smoothly.

However, the situation in the area remained tense.



TAKING AIM: Police appear ready to fire during the protest yesterday in which at least eight residents of Orange Farm were injured.

WHEN INTEREST RATES GO UP, WE HELP SOUTH AFRICA OUT.

An interest rate hike affects us in many ways. That's why at OUTsurance we gladly *help our clients OUT* by keeping their premiums fixed for one year. It's a guarantee we give you as our client because as fellow South Africans, we understand that when interest rates go up, every bit helps. Not only do we guarantee your premium for one year, you also save money because you don't pay commission to a broker. To benefit from our quick and efficient service, call OUTsurance now on **08 600 60 000**.

OUTsurance. You always get something OUT.

08 600 60 000

Please visit our website at www.outsurance.co.za
OUTsurance is an authorised financial services provider (licence number 898)

FULL STORY IN World Bank rates SA as top country in Africa for business
BUSINESS REPORT

9 771016 370005

STAR (SBPT 2006)

OUT/5715/E