

KAKAMAS INTEREST GROUP/BELANGEGROEP

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For immediate release

BULK ELECTRICITY SUPPLY SUSPENSION LOOMS DUE TO BILLIONS IN UNPAID ELECTRICITY BILLS

Kakamas, Northern Cape: Local households and businesses currently start each new day in fear that their bulk electricity supply could be suspended at any time, without notice.

This is due to the Kai !Garib Municipality owing Eskom R1.036 billion in unpaid bills - roughly three times more than the municipality's income which, according to its June 2025 financial statements, amounted to R376 million.

Eskom confirmed in a media statement last week that it is temporarily lifting the suspension of bulk electricity supply to the area pending the submission of an urgent application to the High Court in Kimberley by the Municipality this past Monday (11 May), but that suspension of bulk electricity supply can go ahead without notice, should said court application not be submitted on this day.

With neither the municipality, the Court, nor Eskom being able to confirm whether the urgent application was submitted and what the outcome was, the Kakamas Interest Group says businesses and the community live in constant fear and uncertainty that their bulk electricity supply can be suspended at any moment.

Jaco Visser, chairperson of the Interest Group, says having no power supply will force businesses to shut down, or use generators powered by diesel which is currently very expensive due to the war in the Middle East.

"We are so sad that the Municipality gambles with the livelihoods of the citizens of Kakamas, Keimoes, Kenhardt and Kanoneiland. People will lose their income. Farmers gearing up for the citrus harvesting season need cooling to export their products so that money can flow into this area and people can be employed. It feels like the Municipality's councillors do not appreciate these basic economic facts."

Visser adds, "The councillors are also being very lax in communicating this whole issue with the community, leaving everyone physically in the dark. They do not allow us to plan for eventualities."

This is the second time since 2019 the Municipality has had to approach the court to prevent a power supply interruption due to an unpaid account.

Eskom also confirmed in its press statement last week that Kai !Garib is one of two municipalities in the region approaching the High Court to stop electricity suspension due to non-payment.

The second municipality is the Dr. Beyers Naudé Local Municipality (Graaff Reinet). The statement also confirmed that the planned electricity interruption due to non-payment by the Mamusa Local Municipality (Schweizer-Reneke) began last week Friday (8 May).

The perceived electricity supply uncertainty adds to a list of Municipal service delivery failures in the area reported on in national media, including months of unreliable water supply and allegations that water is not safe to consume earlier this year, compelling community leaders to start a petition to remove the technical director and the executive mayor of the Kai !Garib Local Municipality.

The municipal water supply crisis has been ongoing for roughly three years, resulting in seven allegedly related deaths in the area in 2023.

*****The Kakamas Interest Group, a member-driven organisation, was founded in November 2017 with its primary aim of holding the local municipality accountable to its Constitutional and legal obligations towards its citizens and to act in the best interest of all inhabitants of the Kai !Garib Local Municipality.**

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