



## INTERNET ARTICLE

### Department of Water and Sanitation celebrates Enforcement Month

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The Department of water and Sanitation has appealed to South Africans across the spectrum to refrain from polluting rivers and other water resources as part of the messaging around November as the Enforcement Month.

To celebrate the month, the department's Enforcement Unit (the Blue Scorpions) will conduct raids among identified transgressors who pollute water resources in parts of the country. The pollution of rivers is a violation of the National Water Act of 1998.

Last month the department published a State of the Rivers report which painted a gloomy picture about the state of the country's rivers for the year 2017/18. Apparently, two years later, the situation has not changed, with toxic waste being dumped into these precious water resources.

The report found that the pollution of rivers posed a serious challenge to water security for the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The report further said that the deteriorating water quality was one of the main challenges that posed a serious constraint on economic and social development. This reduced the sustainability of available resource and impacted significantly on the cost of treating water.

"If no substantive action is taken, the water deficit by 2030 could be between 2,7 and 3,8 billion megalitres per annum – a gap of about 17% of available surface and groundwater. The growing requirements of neighbouring states for water from our shared basins could further impact on water availability for South Africa," the report said.

Informal settlement dwellers, municipalities, abattoirs and industries are the country's biggest polluters of water. Mines are notorious for not re-treating their used water that results in acid mine drainage. It is against this background that the Enforcement Unit of the department takes action against the transgressors.

In the past years the unit has issued directives and prosecuted dozens of transgressors, including those who are involved in sand mining. Sand mining has become particularly notorious in the coastal belt of KwaZulu-Natal where culprits normally harvest sand and sell it to the construction industry.

Action was taken against abattoirs in Villiers and other towns of the Free State after they dumped cattle carcasses on the Vaal River. The abattoirs also spilled the blood of their slaughtered cattle into the river, thereby putting the health of downstream users at risk.

The enforcement unit also took action against some mining houses on the Highveld of Mpumalanga who were guilty of polluting groundwater in Middleburg, Ogies, Lydenberg and Emalaheni. Research shows that 90% of groundwater on the Highveld is polluted by mining houses.



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Dozens of municipalities have been brought to book for failing to treat their waste and allowed it to flow into rivers. Farmers were also raided and prosecuted for operating their private dams without water use licenses.

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