

TAC pickets outside UNHCR in Pretoria

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Created 2008/07/03 - 12:30pm

3 July, 2008 - 12:30 ? moderator

On 2 July, TAC organised a picket outside of the United Nations building in Pretoria to demand a response to a memorandum handed over to the UNHCR by Gauteng civil society on 20 June 2008. The event was attended by 600 people, all of whom called on the UNHCR to intervene in the humanitarian crisis now facing South Africa.

The community leader from the refugee camp in Acasia highlighted of the plight of foreign nationals living in the camp. He spoke of the poor conditions in the camp and told people about the hunger strike they are currently on to protest being given outdated food - and even expired infant formula, dated 2003.

TAC's Secretary General Vuyiseka Dubula also spoke about civil society's frustration over the lack of response from the UNHCR after 12 days and the belief that the UNHCR is not interested in addressing the matters raised in the memorandum.

A representative of the UNHCR promised to address the memorandum promptly and admitted that he and his peers and seniors had not discussed the matter yet.

TAC members in Gauteng have pledged to follow up on the issue and expect some tangible response (or at least acknowledgment of receipt) from the UNHCR by the end of this week.

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