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TAC responds to Cape Town Mayor Helen Zille's misrepresentation of TAC's litigation

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In Cape Town Mayor Helen Zille's recent address to the full City Council (27 August 2008) she states that it is disingenuous for the TAC to withdraw its case in the High Court (demanding norms and standards from government for the sites housing displaced persons) on the basis that these have subsequently been provided because the TAC "was party to the formulation of these standards from the word go, and knew they were coming".

It is this statement, however, that is disingenuous and factually incorrect. TAC and civil society have been requesting the publication of norms and standards from at least 18 June 2008. These requests were repeatedly made at the Civil Society Task Team meetings held between civil society and government officials at the Human Rights Commission offices. Notes from these meetings show that government undertook to provide these standards by Monday 7 July 2008. This is laid out in our letter to Premier Rasool on 4 June 2008 and reiterated in another letter on 11 June 2008. We did not receive a reply to either letter.

TAC made numerous offers to be party to such formulations which were consistently declined by government officials. It should be noted that TAC only made its court application on 29 July 2008 after all other avenues had been exhausted. We cited the city because they are responsible for the operation of the refugee camps established by the mayor and have joint responsibility for developing and implementing norms and standards. Considering government's inability or reluctance to produce or adhere to norms and standards after 9 weeks of the crisis, it is only reasonable to conclude that that it was the TAC court application that prompted government to act.

Click here for TAC's letter to Mayor Zille about the withdrawal of the case.

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