

Tenants threatened with death, court told

FIVE black tenants who live in a block of flats in the white area of Albert Park, Durban, who feared they would be killed in a bloodbath, went to the Supreme Court for protection yesterday.

In an urgent application heard by Mr Justice Hugo in Chambers, Lily Beatrice Ngcobo, Moses Khumalo, Bajabuhle Happiness Gumede, Bhekokuhle Dube and Messiah T. Ntshangase were granted an interim order against the building supervisor, Mr Lolly Ramlall, restraining him from harassing,

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threatening, intimidating or in any way interfering with them.

In an affidavit, Miss Ngcobo said Mr Ramlall told her that the flat in which she lived, Rozelge, was not "Mandela's flat".

"He said that he himself was a terrorist and could call his own gangsters to sort us out. He told us that we had to vacate the premises by midnight on August 31. He threatened that if we did not vacate the

premises he would call in gangsters and there would be a bloodbath," said Miss Ngcobo.

The three other applicants also submitted affidavits about threats of a bloodbath which was to take place at midnight on August 31.

The five applicants said they turned to the Durban Central Residents Association, an organisation active in the field of tenants' rights.

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Albert Park flat tenants at 'their wits end'

By Geraldine Malherbe

TENANTS of a block of flats in Durban's Albert Park area are 'at their wits end' after more than two weeks without electricity — and now five of them have had an interdict served on the block's supervisor, Mr Lolly Ramlall.

The interdict, restraining him from 'assaulting, harassing, threatening, intimidating or in any way interfering with the applicants and members of the applicants' families', was served on Friday after Mr Ramlall had given them until the end of August to move out.

Rozelge, a block of flats in St George's Street, has been surrounded by controversy for more than a month with several tenants embarking on a rent boycott on July 26.

Exorbitant

Mr Sayed-Iqbal Mohamed, chairman of the Durban Central Residents' Association, said one of the main reasons for the rent boycott was to force the legitimate owners of Rozelge to come into the open.

He said the boycott was as a result of exorbitant rents, the urgent need for repairs to the building, and the need to expel the supervisor.

Meanwhile, the electricity was cut off and Mr Ramlall gave boycotters until the end of August to move out.

Mr Ramlall, who originally claimed he was the owner, said he was merely leasing the building from the real owner, who he identified as a Mr Solly Pillay.

A right

He said he wasn't a 'charity organisation' and the electricity had been cut off because the people hadn't paid their bills.

Mr Ramlall said he had a right to raise tenants' rents as he had spent a lot of money on renovations since he took over as landlord in May.

When the Mercury visited the block, most tenants said they were being charged as much as R400 a month for a room measuring about 3 m by 4 m.

The toilets and communal bathrooms were also in a disgusting state — many of them blocked and in a filthy condition.

The building was in pitch darkness and several tenants said they were afraid to go out of their rooms at night for fear of being attacked.

Meanwhile, the City Health Department has served notices on Mr Ramlall for offences ranging from structural defects to dirty conditions in the building.