

# Group Areas challenge to mayor

By Rafiq Rohan

IN an act of desperation the more than 200 families who face eviction from the Albert Park area, yesterday challenged Durban's mayor, Mr Stan Lange, to inter-

vene on their behalf and have the evictions stayed.

The panic stricken residents are also requesting a meeting with Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr Chris Heunis to discuss their plight.

Acting on behalf of the tenants, the Durban Central Residents Association challenged the mayor: "As First Citizens your stand against evictions in terms of the Group Areas Act will indicate your concern and support for the plight of those who are affected."

The challenge is made in an open letter to the mayor and is signed by Sayed Iqbal Mohamed, the chairman of the DCRA.

Mr Mohamed called upon the mayor not to "fail those in desperate need."

Both the mayor and the deputy mayor, Mr Henry Klotz, were not available yesterday to comment.

A rough estimate reveals that about 200 families are involved and Mr Mohamed told "The Leader" that this figure could even be higher. A count to be taken this weekend will reveal an exact figure he said.

"The Leader" in its investigation discovered that more and more of the affected families are coming forward to be identified. Prior to them receiving notices they preferred to remain anonymous. Now their attitude has changed as they have "nothing to lose".

## CLAMPDOWN

Most of the tenants ascribe the clamp down on their "illegal" occupancy to the recent victory of the National Party candidate who had promised his White constituents that he would apply Group Areas policies once elected.

The landlords and their agents have adopted a sympathetic attitude towards Coloured and Indian tenants.

In fact, they are the ones who stand to lose the most because dozens of flats will remain unoccupied which lead to loss of revenue.

The affected residents are receiving notices from their landlords or agents informing them that they are no longer welcome.

The eviction notices  
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## Plea to Mayor, Minister

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are accompanied by the letter sent by the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, informing them that the department is satisfied that the property is occupied in contravention of provisions of the Group Areas Act.

"Take notice that the said Deputy Minister, acting in terms of Section 41 of the aforesaid Act, has directed that after expiry of three months after the date of receipt hereof the property be sold in terms of subsection (1) of that section and that the proceeds of the sale be disposed of in terms of subsection (5) of that section".

Rather than have their properties sold the landlords chose to send eviction orders to tenants.

## VACANT HOUSES

On Sunday night at a meeting of the tenants, Mr Mohamed said that there are 37000 houses lying vacant in White areas whilst more than 600,000 houses are needed for Blacks.

"Therefore Blacks have no alternative but to occupy vacant dwellings in "White" areas.

"Mr Rajbansi said that he would resign if the sword of Damocles (the Group Areas Act) is not removed, yet on Sunday he appealed to tenants to apply for permits.

"In other words he would allow the Act to stand above his conscience — an act which is far more devastating than the sword of Damocles" said Mr Mahomed.

A resolution was passed at the multi-racial meeting calling upon members of the Houses of Delegates and Representatives and for the DCRA to challenge the eviction notices.

Copies of the resolution were sent to the various foreign embassies in the country.