

If negotiations fail, president will use his powers

 PS tells Masama-Mmamashia pipeline encroachers



Ground breaking of Masama-Mmamashia pipeline

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BG reporter

Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services, Bonolo Khumotaka says her ministry will thoroughly and massively consult those encroaching on the Masama-Mmamashia pipeline route and, if the process fails, will escalate the matter to President Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi to use his powers.

Speaking to *BG News* after the ground breaking ceremony of the 100kms Masama-Mmamashia water pipeline constructed by Khato Civils to the tune of P780 million, Khumotaka revealed that so far there are only three left and “we will do our best on our part to manage those particular individuals and make sure that the project is not delayed”.

This publication has reliably learnt that out of the 26 farms that had encroached on the route, 23 have paved way and one of the three remaining, has vowed that she will not move out come what may, even if compensated.

Khumotaka said they are meeting with the lady this week to try and convince her to move. She said the contractor has already started trenching and had to skip the area where the lady’s farm is encroaching.

“As the ministry we do not want the project to delay because all Batswana especially in the southern part of the country are experiencing and affected by shortage of water. This means the only way out is to complete this project as quickly as possible.

“We will be meeting here this week and we are hoping that we will reach a conclusion. We are not wishing and or willing for the matter to be escalated to the president in order for him to use the powers to relieve her that land.

“We will not use force against the person, but the concerned person must understand that at the end of the day whether she or he likes it or not they will have to move out because if such a person continues to occupy the land, the law allows us to appeal to the president and once the matter reaches that stage such a person will have to move out.

I believe we will reach a solution as she too appears to understand our plea”.

She said their aim is to ensure that this individual understands that this is a project of national importance versus her individual concerns on that piece of land. “If the need arises we will show her the laws governing this type of process, so that she can understand that she is not being bulldozed or her rights being trampled on”.

Currently there are three individuals who are still to pave way. “But it is different with the other two we are talking the same language, but with the third individual, I think she feels she has already surrendered a bigger piece of land during the construction of NSC1 and she feels that this is too much for her.

“So when you negotiate with this kind of person, as a consulting officer you need to put yourself into her shoes and understand where she is coming from without compromising the law, one need to explain to the person that she is not being marginalised or discriminated”.

She said in their consultations they have given her many examples that anybody can pave way irrespective of their status in order to bring developments in all the sectors of the economy.

“It must be understood that land is such an asset, in most cases one feels the pain once such land is taken from them.

The only thing that I can blame her for is while we were still in consultation and even when she realised the pipeline was being trenched, she went ahead and fenced the area. She erected the fence about three weeks ago”.

