

Politics & Society

Shack maze hinders police, inquiry told

BEKEZELA PHAKATHI
Political Correspondent

CAPE TOWN — Eradicating informal settlements will be a crucial element of improving policing in townships, an advocate representing the South African Police Service (SAPS) at the Khayelitsha commission of inquiry said yesterday.

Norman Arendse told the commission that policing in Khayelitsha, particularly in the informal settlements was a difficult task, "if not impossible".

He said it was also doubtful that boosting police numbers and vehicles in the area would be the answer to the problems the police faced there.

Mr Arendse said the in loco inspections carried out by the commission over the past two days had revealed the difficulties police face in doing their work in the area, particularly at night.

The commission of inquiry is meant to investigate inefficiencies or the breakdown of relations between the community and the SAPS. It began public hearings yesterday, with interested parties delivering opening statements.

The venue of the inquiry, on Lookout Hill in Khayelitsha, was packed almost to capacity with residents following proceedings closely. The commission was set up by Western Cape Premier Helen Zille in 2012 after complaints by non-profit organisations including the Social Justice Coalition and various community organisations in Khayelitsha about the state of policing in the area.

Residents of the sprawling and poverty-stricken township on the outskirts of Cape Town say the lack of effective policing has given rise to vigilante groups taking matters into their own hands and killing suspected criminals.

Mr Arendse told the commission that vigilante killings were an act of criminality driven by the desire for "so-called instant justice which is rooted in our historical past (apartheid)".

Mr Arendse called upon residents of the township to show more trust in the police.

"We appeal to residents of Khayelitsha to take a leap of faith

... this a new police force which operates (within the confines of human rights)," he said.

Mr Arendse said the SAPS would co-operate fully with the commission and would be part of any lasting solution to the problems in Khayelitsha.

While questioning the first witness of the day, Bhekithemba Simelane of the Western Cape community safety department, Mr Arendse said the police seemed to struggle to locate some of the places in Khayelitsha, either because they were not clearly named or because residents referred to the area by another name not known to the police.

Mr Arendse said this affected police response times.

The brutal acts of vigilantism that have claimed dozens of lives are the shocking end result of this erosion (of trust)

Mr Simelane said there was some difficulty in informal settlements in identifying street names and, indeed, sometimes the settlements themselves.

In her opening remarks, Ncumisa Mayosi, who represents the Social Justice Coalition and other complainant organisations in the matter, said that during the course of the hearings, evidence would be placed before the commission showing, among other things, that members of the Khayelitsha community routinely experience violations of their constitutional rights in their dealings with the police and that trust and faith in the police, and in their ability to protect residents from harm, had been eroded.

"The brutal acts of vigilantism that have claimed dozens of lives in recent years are the shocking end result of this erosion," Ms Mayosi said.

She said the purpose of the commission was not to apportion blame, but to improve safety and access to justice.

The hearings continue today. phakathib@bdfm.co.za

Marika Sboros considers whether supplements are a waste or beneficial to health Study revives the great vitamin debate

ARE vitamins a waste of money and dangerous, or are they just the latest victims of bad science? Debate on the topic is becoming increasingly heated, with recent research suggesting they may be a waste of money, while some specialists are strongly countering that view.

The end of last year brought a perennial scientific argument: research in a reputable medical journal showing that vitamin and mineral supplementation was as helpful to health as sawdust — and possibly harmful.

And the new year is ushering in growing reaction from experts, who say the research is fatally flawed.

The studies, in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* in December, by scientists at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in the US, and British scientists at Warwick University, include a meta-analysis of 24 trials involving 450,000 people.

It found no beneficial effect on mortality from vitamin supplementation. Another paper examined cognitive decline in 6,000 elderly men and found no improvement, despite 12 years on multivitamins.

A third paper looked at the effects of multivitamins on heart disease in 1,700 men and women over five years, and similarly concluded supplementation was unhelpful.

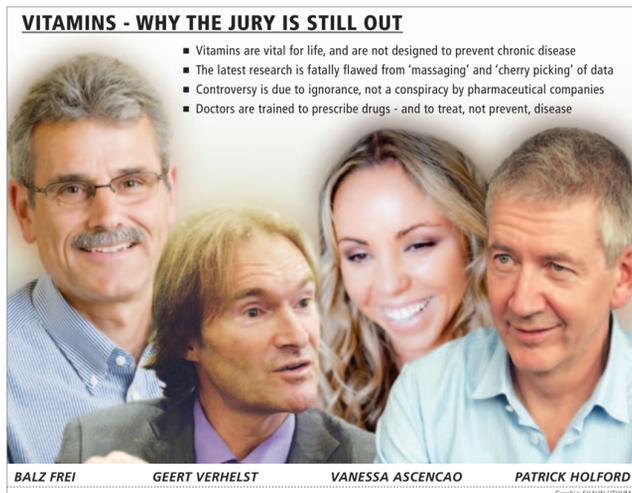
In a journal editorial, the researchers said vitamin use is not justified as it can cause harm, and should be avoided. They said vitamins should not be used for chronic disease prevention.

A common response to such views is of the conspiracy theory variety: that "Big Pharma" is behind the research. Drug maker Pfizer funds one of the studies.

US professor of biochemistry and biophysics Balz Frei believes there is no conspiracy, since pharmaceutical companies, including Pfizer and Bayer, make and sell vitamin products.

However, the research is terminally ill, he says. He and other experts have found a litany of design faults, including a high dropout rate, low adherence, use of low-potency, low-quality vitamin products, and "massaging" and "cherry-picking" of data.

An aggravating factor is ignorance by doctors who know little about nutrition, he says.



VITAMINS - WHY THE JURY IS STILL OUT
Balz Frei, Geert Verhelst, Vanessa Ascencio, Patrick Holford

They are not trained in it, and do not understand how vitamins and minerals work in the body.

"Doctors don't prescribe vitamins because they are trained to prescribe pharmaceutical drugs only, and to treat disease, not prevent it," he says.

Ignorance also makes scientists reach the right conclusions for the wrong reasons: "It is correct to say vitamins shouldn't be used to prevent chronic disease, not because they don't work, but because that's not their function," says Prof Frei.

"Vitamins are necessary for life, for normal biological functions, not to prevent chronic disease. They support the function of cells for normal metabolism, immune function, and growth development — all basic processes related not to prevention of chronic disease, but to optimum health." Most doctors do not know the difference between vitamin deficiencies and inadequacies, he says.

Most people have inadequate levels of vitamin C, but are not deficient; if they were, they would have deficiency diseases such as scurvy or pellagra.

Vitamin inadequacies prevent optimum functioning of biological processes, he says.

Inadequacies are common

and easily resolved by eating the recommended five to nine servings daily of fruit and vegetables. Most people do not eat sufficient quantities of these.

Whether a multivitamin and mineral can protect against cognitive decline, cancer and heart disease is controversial, but the evidence is "fairly good" for some of these diseases, Dr Frei says.

In an editorial, the researchers said vitamin use is not justified as it can cause harm, and should be avoided

Findings last year from the most comprehensive, longest and largest study on multivitamins, the Physicians Health Study II, which followed more than 14,000 doctors over 11 years, shows that a daily multivitamin lowers total cancer rate by a significant 8%, and 13%, when prostate cancer is discounted, Prof Frei says.

Solid data on cognitive function and eye disease show a significant 13% total reduction in cataracts. The study shows no effects on cognitive function or

heart disease. Other studies over five years ("the minimum required in such research") show beneficial effects on heart disease from vitamin and mineral supplements.

None shows harmful effects, because unlike pharmaceutical drugs, vitamins have never killed anyone, Prof Frei says.

When taken appropriately, according to recommended daily allowances (RDAs) and "tolerable upper intake limit", vitamins are proven safe and beneficial in properly designed studies, he says.

The standard design of scientific research, the "gold standard" — randomised, placebo-controlled control trials — does not work for essential nutrients (vitamins and minerals).

"It would be unethical to make people deficient or inadequate in a micronutrient to test for an effect," Prof Frei says.

"Doctors end up doing research on people who already have (varying) levels of vitamins and minerals. The placebo group is not the same as in a pharmaceutical group, and statistical power to see something significant is small," he says.

British nutrition specialist Patrick Holford, founder of the Institute for Optimum Nutrition,

says the latest research is "pure prejudice", and another "long-standing scientific tradition — regular publication of poorly conceived studies that don't clarify anything".

"No one who knows about nutrition, or is interested in adding to our knowledge of what does and doesn't work, would have conducted these studies," says Mr Holford.

"Why try to prevent dementia with a fairly low-dose multivitamin when there is already a good randomised trial (by Oxford University scientists) showing it is possible to slow down brain shrinkage and memory loss, the two hallmarks of Alzheimer's, with high doses of B vitamins to those at risk," he says.

"That's about half the population over 65."

Giving multivitamins to heart disease patients who are also on a range of powerful drugs is "equally ignorant".

The informed approach is to use specific supplements known to benefit heart disease on patients who are deficient, Mr Holford says.

Other specialists, among them Dr Geert Verhelst, a Belgian medical doctor and phytotherapy (plant medicine) specialist, who visited SA last year to talk about diabetes and cholesterol control, say the use of inferior, synthetic vitamin products with low levels of essential micronutrients that are likely to be poorly absorbed, is another major study weakness.

Cape Town nutrition consultant Vanessa Ascencio says the research findings are "reductionist, closed-minded thinking".

In an ideal world, we would get all nutrients needed from food, but people are eating food almost totally devoid of nutrients, and they are not exercising, Ms Ascencio says. "That's a fatal combination".

Ms Ascencio says 56% of women in SA are overweight, 33% of men are overweight, and 22% of children aged 2-5 years are obese. "We have a rise in diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and cancer, many of which are preventable," she says.

Vitamin and mineral supplements are not a "cure-all". They help to "bridge the gap between what our diets supply nutrient-wise, and what we need for optimal health", she says.

Local winemakers urged to consider focusing on lucrative US market

PAUL VECCHIATTO
Political Correspondent

CAPE TOWN — South African wine producers should rethink their international marketing strategies and consider making a bigger impact in the US, says Stephen Ranneklev, executive director for beverage research at Robobank in New York.

At wine producer organisation VinPro's information day on Thursday, Mr Ranneklev said South African wine producers had not developed a unique selling point. They were not creating enough awareness of their

products — and South African wines generally — through platforms such as social media.

He cited data from Google showing consumers were increasingly using the internet to research products before buying. "I think SA could do more on social media to tell its unique wine story than it is," he said.

Mr Ranneklev said South African wines were doing well in "naturally restorative" markets such as the UK, Germany and Netherlands. But these markets had experienced consolidation in their wholesale and retail sectors, were seeing increases in excise

duties and taxes that were eating into margins, and were increasingly under pricing pressure.

The US market was little penetrated by South African wines though they had a good general pricing point and appeal due to their quality and a unique story.

Mr Ranneklev said he thought SA could do more to promote the fact that it was the world's largest producer of Fairtrade wines — produced using ethical production and labour means.

"There will always be the ethical appeal to some consumers in various markets," he said.

The Fairtrade website says

two-thirds of the 21.8-million bottles of wine produced under its certification came from SA.

Van Loveren wine estate CEO Philip Retief said the South African wine sector had entered an exciting stage.

"For the past three years we have seen wine sales grow by 2% or 3% a year after about 15 years of stagnant growth," he said.

Mr Retief attributed this growth to three factors.

These were that the emerging black middle class was drinking more wine, that wine price increases had lagged behind those of other alcoholic beverages, and

that the industry had become more consumer-orientated by creating products they wanted.

He also said the better than expected European wine harvest, caused by Italian producers suddenly crushing an extra 400,000 tons of grapes, may have a dampening effect on South African wine exports, but this may be alleviated by the rand's depreciation against the dollar and other currencies.

Mr Retief said a reduction of 10% of the European wine harvest was roughly equivalent to SA's total production.

"This means the South African producers could be a swing factor

in the international wine market," he said.

He said South African producers could take more advantage of the fact that the country was the largest producer of Fairtrade wines, but that certification probably did not have the market influence that it should have.

"Fairtrade has been very successful with coffee and chocolate produced in South America, but it hasn't quite had the same impact on wine. This is probably because of the higher price that consumers would pay," he said.

The head of VinPro's consultancy service, Francois Viljoen,

said the 2014 harvest was running seven to 14 days late.

This was due to the long, cool spring that was experienced, as well as the unseasonal rains in January, during which some areas, such as Worcester and Breede River, received an unexpected extra 25mm.

"The crop won't be as large as last year's, which was a record crop," he said.

Mr Viljoen said VinPro was not releasing harvest-expectation figures as negotiations between producers and buyers had reached a sensitive stage.

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ENERGY LEADERS ROUNDTABLE
Powering South Africa to 2030 and Beyond
Securing the Nation's Energy Future

Lead Presenters:

- Mr Dikobe Ben Martins, Minister of Energy
- Mr Brian Statham, Chairman South African National Energy Association
- Mr Pascal Moloi, Member of the National Planning Commission
- Mr Sizwe Mncwango, CEO, CEF Group of Companies
- Ms Joanne Yawitch, CEO, National Business Initiative

Date: 11 February 2014 - Venue: Park Hyatt Hotel, Rosebank, JHB - Registration: 8.30am

This is an invitation-only event for Senior Executives in the Energy Sector. A very limited number of seats is still available on a complimentary basis. To register send email to louise@siyenzaevents.co.za

Air France-KLM will look at reinvesting in ailing Italian carrier Alitalia if the conditions it set for its restructuring are met, the Franco-Dutch airline's CE said yesterday. "Our partnership with Alitalia is very important," Alexandre de Juniac said at an event organised by the European American Press Club. Page 14

Reserve weighed for defaulters' properties

ERNEST MABUZA
Legal Writer

A LIKELY change in law could see a reserve price being set for the sale in execution of defaulting debtors' homes.

The idea behind exploring the amendment of Uniform Rule 46 for the high courts and Rule 43 of the Magistrate's Courts Rules is to protect debtors in instances where their homes are sold for an extremely low amount and they still find themselves owing money to their creditors.

This week, the Rules Board for Courts of Law invited comments on the proposed amendment. The board says that assuming there is support for the proposal, it would mean that a property that failed to reach its reserve price would not be sold, thus giving a debtor some protection. The deadline for submissions is February 28.

The secretary to the rules board, Raj Daya, said courts had shown concern in cases before them about houses that were sold in execution for a fraction of their value. Mr Daya said it was important to ask if the forced sales in execution were a justifiable way of satisfying judgment creditors and protecting debtors.

"The rules board has decided to ascertain from stakeholders, when it comes to sales in execution, whether the issue of a reserve price should be considered," Mr Daya said.

He also said the reserve price would take into account the amounts that people had paid towards their bond before defaulting. "Assuming there is support from stakeholders, what that means is that the house would not be sold for a small amount," Mr Daya said.

The Banking Association of SA said it had not received input from its members.

The association's legal committee chairman, Nicky Lala-Mohan, said the proposed amendment was a response to court judgments that set parameters for what courts must do to ensure they exercise oversight when the constitutional right to access to adequate housing is implicated. Mr Lala-Mohan said the argument for setting reserve prices was to protect the defaulter from being held liable for a large debt to the creditor after the property had been sold for a small amount.

Although the banks could decide to buy a property rather than allow it to be sold for a low price, they were under no obligation to do so. Mr Lala-Mohan said that if the banks resold the property, the profit would be credited to the debtor.

Socio-Economic Rights Institute of SA executive director Stuart Wilson said the proposed amendments were a good idea. He said sales in execution without a reserve price were vulnerable to collusion between players in sales in execution and the auction industry, which could result in the sale of houses at rock-bottom prices — to the prejudice of the debtor.

This was also prejudicial to the creditor, which still needed to recoup the balance of the debt from the person whose house had been sold at a low price.

"Without a reserve price, there is no safeguard that somebody's property cannot be sold at rock-bottom prices."

Mr Wilson said that setting a reserve price would assist creditors in recovering their debt. mabuzae@timesmedia.co.za

FAIRVEST
PROPERTY HOLDINGS

Fairvest Property Holdings Limited
Incorporated in the Republic of South Africa
Registration number: 1998/005011/06
Linked unit code: FV1 ISIN: ZAC000034658
(The Company)

ACQUISITION NOT PROCEEDING, WITHDRAWAL OF CAUTIONARY ANNOUNCEMENT

Acquisition not proceeding

- Linked unitholders are referred to the Company's SENS announcement on 14 November 2013 ("Transaction Announcement") regarding the conclusion of an acquisition agreement ("Acquisition Agreement") with Old Mutual Life Assurance Company (South Africa) Limited ("Old Mutual") for the acquisition of certain retail properties by the Company from Old Mutual ("Old Mutual Acquisition").
- As indicated in the Transaction Announcement, the Old Mutual Acquisition is subject to the fulfilment of various conditions precedent, including confirmation by the Company that it has completed a due diligence investigation in connection with the acquisition portfolio to its satisfaction ("Due Diligence CP").
- As indicated in the Company's SENS announcement on 16 January 2014, certain matters were identified by the Company during the due diligence investigation as being potentially material to the Due Diligence CP. As a result, the Company did not confirm fulfilment of the Due Diligence CP, resulting in the Acquisition Agreement lapsing. At the time of the Company's SENS announcement on 16 January 2014, the Company was still, as indicated in that announcement, in discussions with Old Mutual regarding the possible reinstatement of the Acquisition Agreement upon revised terms.
- Linked unitholders are advised that the Company and Old Mutual have been unable to agree on revised terms for the reinstatement of the Acquisition Agreement and that the Company will therefore not be proceeding with the Old Mutual Acquisition.

Withdrawal of cautionary announcement

- Linked unitholders are referred to the cautionary announcement contained in the Transaction Announcement, as renewed by the Company in its subsequent announcements dated 24 December 2013 and 16 January 2014. Whereas the Company will not be proceeding with the Old Mutual Acquisition, caution is no longer required to be exercised by linked unitholders when dealing in the Company's securities.

23 January 2014
Cape Town

Sponsor and Corporate Advisor
PSG CAPITAL

District Manager
Midrand

Key deliverables in field of expertise: • Operate on behalf of a principal to manage the enterprise portfolio within southern Africa • Be the primary contact and conduit for the Dealer for all strategic matters between the dealership and principal. Build and enhance relationships between Dealers and all sectors of the Principal • Maintain knowledge of regional business conditions and developments and close working relationships with our dealers • Continue developing and maintaining a world class distribution network in southern Africa via a Dealership network • Lead the effort in aligning / prioritizing dealer and industry strategies for capital equipment • Enhance overall relationship with the dealer network • Selection / Succession / Termination Dealers in conformance with the global dealer administration process and the approval of Distribution Services leadership • Dealer Capability and Development execution.

Qualifications/experience: • Requires a college or university degree and 15 - 18 years' experience in marketing/product support areas including field assignments, staff and supervisory positions • Strong knowledge of dealership workings and dealer organizations • International experience required • 6 Sigma experience would be highly beneficial • In addition to strong leadership skills, this role needs someone who has highly proficient team working skills and has the interpersonal skills to successfully influence others and achieve goals across the Enterprise and Dealer organizations.

Submissions: If you meet the minimum requirements please send your CV to oberem_glynis@cat.com.

Closing date: 31 January 2014. If you have had no response within 2 weeks of the closing date, please consider your application as unsuccessful.