

KZN protests hot up

'We won't give up'

A public order policeman chases after protesters in Folweni. RIGHT: Children cover their eyes after being tear-gassed by police.



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and CHRIS NDALISO**

A BITTER spat over an ANC election candidate list led to the torching of a fire station, Public Works Department building and a ward councillor's office in Folweni.

A primary school was closed as protests continued for the fourth week in the south Durban township yesterday, with children, some as young as eight, joining rioters and stoning police.

Rioters, mainly children, also looted a Pakistani-owned grocery store.

The *Daily News* witnessed a shop owner paying off rioters to spare his shop from being looted, and other shop owners said they had done the same.

Protesters warned there would be no let-up until they got answers from the ANC regional offices.

The destruction of public property and the looting of businesses follow last week's anarchy in iSithebe where rioters petrol-bombed factories and looted businesses, causing millions of rands in damage and halting work in the North Coast business par

Nkosinathi Cele, chairman of the Peoples Movement in Ward 95, said they did not want candidate Thokozani Xulu.

Cele said they had explained to the regional officers at a meeting late last month and were told they would be given a response in three days.

Cele said while waiting for a simple answer, "rogue elements" set alight eThekweni Ward 95 coun-

cillor Senza Shange's office.

An adjoining building used by the Public Works Department was also extensively damaged.

Cele and the protesters want Sulu Nhlumayo to be nominated for the local government elections.

"The demarcation and creation of Ward 96 in Folweni A-section is where the trouble has started. Xulu is the No1 candidate, but he is not from our area.

"Some thugs set alight the fire station and part of the school. It was beyond our control. No answers, no vote... it's that simple," Cele said.

Yesterday bricks, rubble, burnt debris and metal roadside barriers were placed across S'bu Magwan-yane Drive, the main road through Folweni.

The main road leading to the burnt municipal offices and to a school in Ndabezitha Road was also barricaded, with drums.

Protesters hurled stones and rocks at public order police.

In the afternoon, police used stun grenades to disperse crowds of children, teenagers and adults.

Deputy secretary of the ANC Youth League in Ward 95, Senzo Ngcobo, said the regional executive committee was dealing with the issue.

He said an opposing group did not want to deal with those from the ANC at branch level, to resolve the issue.

"There was a branch executive committee meeting on February 7 at a local primary school. There four people were introduced as the nominated candidates.

"Candidates were taken to a



screening committee on February 20. During this meeting, a bunch of hooligans came in and pulled people off the benches and chairs.

"Now they have shut down Makhulu Primary School and encouraged the children to join the protest. We don't understand why they are vandalising things.

"Rumours and misleading information spread about Xulu and this is what the situation is like now," Ngcobo said.

A Ward 95 resident and member of the faction favouring Xulu, blamed "hell-raisers" for trying to derail the ANC's programmes ahead of the local government elections.

The resident, who asked to remain anonymous, said chaos had been brewing in the area since the announcement of three candidates

nominated at the branch general meeting about a month ago.

"Two weeks later, the ANC provincial leadership convened a meeting to announce the four elected candidates.

"Xulu, our branch secretary for 15 years, is the preferred candidate for the ward councillor position, and these people on the other side say he is an outsider, and therefore can't lead the ward.

"How is he an outsider, yet he has been secretary for 15 years?"

"This is madness and if they (protesters) are ANC members, then they should know there are channels to follow to register grievances," said the resident

A deep divide within ANC party structures which has pitted members supporting current mayor, James Nxumalo, and the

newly-elected eThekweni regional chairwoman, councillor Zandile Gumede, was also to blame for the rioting, says the DA.

Andre Beetge, DA councillor for Ward 97 which includes eManzintoti and its surrounds, said: "This political unrest that started in Folweni three weeks ago, spread into neighbouring Umbumbulu (Ward 100) and Bhukulwandle (Ward 67) along the R603 on Monday."

ANC provincial secretary, Super Zuma, appealed to people to exercise restraint.

"We have sent a provincial team to the area to look into the matter. We feel that certain people are abusing the system because in the ANC there are processes and if people feel aggrieved, they know the relevant channels to follow," said Zuma.