

Gift of the Givers pulls out of Makhanda

By [Lucas Nowicki](#)

17 May 2019

Disaster relief organisation Gift of the Givers unexpectedly announced on Wednesday, 15 May, its immediate withdrawal from Makana Municipality, where Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown) is located.



Gift of the Givers has been distributing water around the drought stricken Makana municipality (where Makhanda, formerly Grahamstown, is located). Photo: Lucas Nowicki

The organisation has been providing much-needed drought relief services including water-filtration services, Jo-Jo tanks and water tankers, since February after the municipality was officially declared a local state of disaster.

In a statement on Wednesday, the organisation's founder, Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, stated that the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) had decided to only pay "local companies" assisting with drought intervention. By then the organisation had already spent R15m. At the time, the municipality had assured the organisation that it would be remunerated from the emergency fund allocated to drought relief but did not commit to how much Gift of the Givers would receive, Sooliman said in the statement.

He said they held over 50 hours of meetings with the department in which Gift of the Givers were asked to "quell unrest related to the provision of water". The statement said that the organisation's withdrawal was not due to a disagreement with the municipality. It was the department's decision to "only pay companies from Grahamstown", the statement read.

R10m to be paid out

"One company would be paid R1.2m for consultancy related to boreholes," the statement read. But it said Gift of the Givers actually did the consultancy work. "Another company will be paid R7m for boreholes which we drilled, and a third company R1.9m for electrical work to connect boreholes ... This is R10m of taxpayers' money handed out freely by the government to people as remuneration for work that Gift of the Givers did."

DWS spokesperson, Sputnik Ratau denied the allegations. He said the department had no role in hiring the companies. He said DWS allocated funds to the municipality who pays providers.

In response to questions, the municipality assured the public that it was “attempting to find a resolution to the issues” with Gift of the Givers. The municipality said that it had made “no guarantee about reimbursement or funding” to the organisation and proper government procedures had to be followed. It claimed that bypassing this process could “give rise to audit queries”.

The municipality added that Gift of the Givers had been assisting “entirely on risk and by their own assessment”.

[Original article](#) published on [GroundUp](#).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>