

There's something fishy in our water!

A local laboratory has found that drinking water in the Orient Heights and Raisethorpe areas is severely contaminated, containing a high concentration of chemicals and metals. The tests were conducted after residents in the area complained of smelly foul tasting water coming out of their domestic taps.

Hydro Purification Company ran a series of tests on water collected from complaining residents. The tests revealed shockingly high levels of contamination, which could have serious health implications for residents, said company, director Diksha Maganbeharee.

"I conducted electrolysis tests which revealed that the tap water contained a high concentration of chemical and metal content. The water measured 0.65 parts per million (ppm) of dissolved solids or impurities," revealed Maganbeharee.

"The world health organization drinking water standard is 0.20 ppm and anything above this is considered a health risk. The outcome of the laboratory tests are expected to cause an outcry among residents of the areas affected, some of whom are already displaying symptoms, they believe are

linked to the contaminated water.

Shaun Mathapershad of Allandale told *Public Eye* that the problem started on Saturday last week. He said that some residents have stopped using tap water and have resorted to buying bottled water instead.

"I developed a fever and started vomiting after drinking the water. I vomited to such an extent that I was not able to go to work on Monday. Since Saturday we have not used tap water. We have bought bottled water for our domestic use" said Mathapershad.

Another resident of Orient Heights said that the taste of water was somewhat bitter and very upsetting. "It smelled like fish and was not good at all," said Neropa Siveram.

Residents who spoke to *Public Eye* also said that it was very sad that there was not much maintenance and monitoring in water reservoirs. According to the *Business Times*, "South Africa is on the brink of a water-contamination crisis, potentially as bad as the electricity fiasco of the past few weeks."

Meanwhile, Umgeni Corporate Stakeholder Manager, Shami Harichunder, said because of the concerns





After an electrolysis test conducted by Hydro Purification Company using a glass of purified water (left) and a glass of tap water (right). The tap water shows high concentration of chemical and metals that could be harmful for human consumption.

raised by the northern suburbs, Umgeni Water took numerous samples of water for testing. The testing found no trace of any bacteria that could cause disease.

“The strange odour experienced in the water could be a result of algae in the water,” said Harichunder.

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Municipality confirmed that residents of the northern suburbs have raised concerns regarding a strange odour and taste in their water supply.

“The reservoir servicing the northern areas has been identified as a possible cause of the problem,” said Evodia Mahlangu in the office of the Mayor.

Mahlangu added that water samples from the reservoir and various other water points were sent to accredited laboratories for both chemical and microbiology analyses.

“We are awaiting the results and residents can be assured that the water is chlorinated and safe for human consumption,” concluded Mahlangu.

