

Robert Brand, Mike Cohen - Where The Heart Is: South Africa's Post-Apartheid Housing Failure

mg.co.za. August 2, 2013. Cecily Ghall speaks with pride about the neat, whitewashed two-room shack she built in an acquaintance's backyard using scrap wooden planks and asbestos plates. It's warm and - important in the midst of a wet winter - dry, she says. But it isn't hers.

Ghall (47) has waited for a government-provided home since 2008, when she and her daughter Deonie, then 13, moved to Kurland Village, a predominantly coloured settlement of about 2 000 residents. Less than 16 kilometres away is Plettenberg Bay, a seaside resort where homes selling for more than R15-million are common.

"I don't know how they decide who gets a house," said Ghall, who works part-time as a domestic servant. *"I've been on the waiting list all this time, but I never hear anything. In the meantime, I have to live in someone's backyard and I can get kicked out at any time."*

Substandard housing remains a legacy of apartheid almost two decades after former President Nelson Mandela's African National Congress came to power in the nation's first multiracial vote. Since then, 3.3-million low-cost homes have been built, yet informal settlements have mushroomed around cities as the state programme failed to keep pace with population growth. The housing backlog of about 1.5-million in 1994 has burgeoned to 2.1-million as the population has grown by 13-million to 53-million, according to government data.

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