

**EXECUTIVE STATEMENT ON KENNEDY ROAD INFORMAL SETTLEMENT
PRESENTED TO THE KZN LEGISLATURE BY
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MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON KZN
ON
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Madame Speaker, Honourable Members allow me to table the executive statement on Kennedy Road Informal Settlement in terms of Rule 100.

The situation in Kennedy Road started on Saturday 26 September 2009 when a group of men carrying weapons, attacked and killed two people and injured others. The MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison visited this area on Sunday 27 September 2009 and suggested that the SAPS Provincial Commissioner together with the Provincial Department for Community Safety and Liaison meet in that community with the purpose of finding the root causes of this conflict.

In terms of research conducted by the Department of Community Safety & Liaison, the root causes of the problems at the Kennedy Road Informal Settlement are socio-economic in nature. People have flocked to the city in the hope of finding jobs, a better life for themselves and their families as well as to access resources. Having found that this is not easily attainable, they have remained in the city mainly in the hope that with the government's Programme to assist the poor through basic service delivery and skills development, they will eventually realize their ambitions.

The reality of the situation therefore is that abject poverty becomes a breeding ground for crime. Safety measures and initiatives are compromised by the social status of these areas. The

emergence of such social problems limits the ability of different departments to deliver projects independently to these areas as there are inherent primary issues which must first be addressed before various departments' programmes of action can be implemented. The conclusion that is then deduced from this is that there is a need for an integrated, comprehensive strategy to address the particular plight of this community. No one department or agency can deliver the relief. Furthermore, it also requires strong inter-governmental co-operation between National, Provincial and Local government.

INTERVENTIONS

Honourable Members, in responding to the plight of Kennedy Road residents, the MEC gave a mandate for a task team to be established for this purpose. The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government Task Team comprised of the Acting Provincial Commissioner of Police in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr. Bongani Ntanjana, the Head of Department of Community Safety and Liaison, Ms. Yasmin Bacus, Ethekwini Municipality Head of Community Participation, Ms. Mina Lesoma, Senior Supt. Msomi of Metro Police, Director Community Policing, Mr. Ismail Nxumalo, and Community Liaison Officer for the area, Mr. Holson Mbhele.

As per the MEC's mandate the first meeting had a sitting on 28 September 2009 at the Kennedy Road Municipal Hall to hear the stakeholder's views and the community's views in regard to the situation at hand. The findings indicated that

- There are political and criminal related incidents;
- The criminal incidents should be separated from political incidents;

- Some Police Members are implicated in working with the Abahlali Base Mjondolo group;
- There is no CPF Sub-forum in Kennedy Road to work with the police in terms of crime prevention initiatives;
- Distribution of food parcels are also a cause of dividing the community; and
- Criminal cases are reported to the local police station but all in vain.

The following resolutions were then taken at this meeting:

- The Provincial Commissioner's Office was to set up a Special Police Task Team to hunt down the criminals who were involved in the incidents that occurred;
- The structure that is called Abahlali Base Mjondolo be dissolved;
- That Kennedy Road Informal Settlement be placed under 24 hour policing by teams from Public Order Policing Unit and the Durban Metro Police;
- Ethekwini Municipality to investigate ways of improving lighting in the area, including the installation of flood-lights;
- Ethekwini Municipality shall without delay clear bushes and plantations that may impinge the work of the police;
- All crime shall be reported to the newly established Special Task Team;
- A special focus will be placed on proliferation of illegal taverns. All legal taverns shall operate within the law including operating hours.

The MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison called for a Communities-in-Dialogue session on the matter. This session took place on Sunday, 4 October 2009 at Kennedy Road Community Hall.

The session commenced with a meeting with the stakeholders where presentations were made by the MEC, the Police and EThekweni Metro. These presentations revealed that there were arrest of 8 suspects for murder, attempted murder and assault GBH, an undertaking by Ethekewini Municipality to install high mast lights or floods lights within three weeks, a proposed housing project for the area that is equivalent to approximately 600 households to start in January 2010, improving the management of the community hall to ensure access to all and the commencement on 30 October 2009 of the establishment of a new CPF sub-forum for the area to be taken forward. Processes towards the establishment of the legitimate CPF sub forum were to commence on 6 October 2009. This was followed by a media briefing which was well covered both in the local and national media.

The session was concluded with a community meeting where the community gave their inputs.

The following resolutions on the way forward were adopted:

- That Kennedy Road Informal Settlement continue to be placed under 24-hour policing by teams from the Public Order Policing Unit and Durban Metro Police;
- That the work of Ethekewini Municipality to install high mast lights within three weeks continue on an urgent basis including the immediate clearance of bushes to improve policing;
- That all crime will continue to be reported to the newly established Special Task Team with a special focus on the proliferation of illegal taverns and the adherence by legal taverns to licence conditions;
- The Kennedy Road Community will be working together with the police to ensure criminals are arrested;

- The Housing Project will start in February 2010 so as to ensure proper accommodation for community members;
- Sydenham Community Policing Forum, the SAPS and the Department of Community Safety and Liaison ensure that the establishment of the recognized CPF sub-forum is completed;
- The MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison shall meet the Faith Based Organizations and Church Pastors in the area including all those with an interest in the matter for purposes of hearing their views since they are assisting some of the victims.
- Furthermore, the MEC will proceed to seek a discussion with the leadership of abahlali basemjondolo in order to find lasting solutions.

DEVELOPMENTS

Madame Speaker, and the Honourable members, the Executive Council of KwaZulu-Natal was appraised of this matter on 7 October 2009 in order to ensure that they are on board as we implement the resolutions taken at various forums with regards to this matter at hand.

On 8 October 2009, the Office of the MEC sent a letter to the leadership of abahlali basemjondolo including the leadership of all interested faith groups requesting that they avail themselves to a meeting on the Kennedy Road matter with the MEC on dates that would be amenable to all parties. The response received to date is from the Zimu group, African Gospel Church who expressed an interest to be part of the meeting. The telephonic conversation with

one of the leaders of abahlali basemjondolo indicated that they are not interested to meet the MEC but the President of the Republic of South Africa.

On 11 October 2009, a meeting was held with approximately 150 community members of Kennedy Road to establish the interim CPF sub forum. The following members were nominated:

- Nkosinathi Gwala
- Jongelizwe Madikizela
- Nonhle Mkhize
- Bazolele Sokukile
- Sindiso Blaai
- Sizwe Dlungwane
- Mandla Mthethwa
- Nqobile Nzama
- Lindiwe Mlangeni
- Bonisiwe Cele
- Mduduzi Sithole

The meeting concluded that on 24 October 2009 a workshop will be held for CPF members at the Community Hall where the members will nominate the CPF Sub Forum Office bearers.

Honourable members, the work of the Task Team on Kennedy Road is commendable. As at 14 October 2009, a total of 15 arrests were made by police. On Saturday 10 October 2009, a key suspect was arrested at Flagstaff in the Eastern Cape. On Sunday, 11 October 2009

two (2) suspects were arrested at Clare Estate. All three men are wanted for murder and public violence at the Kennedy Road Informal Settlement. On the afternoon of 14 October 2009, a key female suspect was once again arrested in Flagstaff in the Eastern Cape. The suspects remain in custody and will appear in Court on Thursday, 15 October 2009.

CONCLUSION

Madame Speaker, as Government we commit to working together to ensure that the plight of the Kennedy Road Community is addressed expediently.

I THANK YOU!