

MEDIA STATEMENT

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MEC REJECTS ETHNICITY SLANT ON KENNEDY ROAD ATTACKS & CALLS FOR COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

KWAZULU-NATAL MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Willies Mchunu has directed that the Department of Community Safety & Liaison through its Communities-in-Dialogue Programme shall assist the Kennedy Road residents to talk and solve all problems peacefully, in the meantime, police have been deployed in greater numbers, and the hunt for killers is on.

Mchunu's comment comes after the formation of a Special Police Task Team to investigate charges of murder, arson, assault and robbery that occurred as a result of the mob attack at the weekend. The mob attack left two people dead, scores of others injured, and a trail of destruction of people's properties. Police have since arrested eight suspects in connection with the mob attack. The new Special Police Task Team was formed after it emerged that the Sydenham Police Station had not acted in a manner beneficiary to the interests of Kennedy Road residents. The claim of police ineptitude is being investigated by the senior police brass. The new Special Police Task Team is expected to be set up by tomorrow.

Mchunu has also rejected the theory that the weekend attacks were motivated by ethnic intolerance or xenophobic in nature. "Let us not give crime fancy names, criminals are exactly that criminals – and they must be treated as such". He is adamant that it is absurd for any one to impose an illegal curfew on residents. He said: "We want to assure all Kennedy Road residents, that, we stand ready to defend their freedoms including their right to freedom of association and the freedom of movement. Criminals, who are holding the Kennedy Road resident's hostage, must be arrested without delay. We want all Kennedy Road residents to be as free as any other citizen in a democratic society. All challenges in the community shall be addressed through dialogue within properly constituted community structures."

However, he maintains that the planned dialogue will in no way replace police's determination to find all culprits responsible for the weekend mayhem. He said, the Department of Community Safety & Liaison, through, its Head of Community Policing, Ishmael Nxumalo is to meet with all community structures including the "Forum" this week.

The aim of the dialogue, according to the MEC, is to restore normal human relations after the weekend mayhem. The dialogue is also expected to assist the community set up a properly recognized Community Policing Structure in the area. "We want to encourage dialogue among all community structures. We know no other solution to conflicts except through talking," he said.

Issued on behalf of the MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison – Hon. Willies Mchunu,

For more information, call MEC's spokesperson Bhekisisa Mncube, 084 928 4412