

MEDIA STATEMENT (for immediate release)

DATE: 23 AUGUST 2009

DON'T LOWER YOUR GUARDS, MEC TELLS POLICE TASK TEAM IN GREYTOWN

"I want to thank the South African Police Service (SAPS) for their diligence and professionalism with which they have handled this volatile political situation. Just do not lower your guards as the peace process requires nurturing," says the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Willies Mchunu. Mchunu's comment comes after a historic Greytown peace accord that was signed on Thursday, and made public on Friday, 21 August, 2009, between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The peace accord follows months of political instability in the area that led to the loss of nine innocent lives, and two serious injuries.

Mchunu said:

"We must be clear in our minds that we have no desire to return to the abyss of a political conflict. In a free and democratic South Africa, there is no just war. I want to caution the police officers deployed in Greytown to remain on high alert."

According to the latest information from the SAPS Greytown Provincial Task Team, a significant number of breakthroughs have been made in their investigations. As a result, of the Task Team's diligent work, five suspects have been arrested. In two cases police investigations are still in progress. Police have assured the MEC that a breakthrough is imminent. "I want to see the suspects in all cases hauled before the court of law soon. We must send a message that in the age of hope, lawlessness; no matter the motive, has no place in the sun. There is no just war in this country. Period!" Mchunu insists.

He said members of the elite police unit, the National Intervention Unit, part of the Provincial Task Team, will remain in Greytown until the intelligence community assures the authorities that those who have acted with wanton disregard for the sanctity of life are jailed, and those who harbour similar ambitions are placed on the intelligence radar screen. We wish once again to urge members of the community to come forward with any information they have that could assist in the investigation.

“Never again shall it be that any member of the greater community of Greytown loses his/her life as a result of any lapses in our local political leadership. We must be bold, and lead our people into a better life for all – in peace, mutual respect and political co-existence. In my political experience, I know no other solution to political conflict except through talks. I also want to commend the local church leadership for their practical support in this process,” Mchunu concluded.

TEXT OF THE GREYTOWN PEACE ACCORD AS AGREED ON THURSDAY (2009/08/20)

At a meeting held on 21 August, 2009 facilitated by the Premiers’ Task Team, between the local leadership of the Inkatha Freedom party (IFP) and, African National Congress (ANC) in the Greytown area (uMvoti) a peace accord was agreed upon. The parties have agreed to smoke the peace pipe, and to work together to prevent any further loss of innocent lives. The local political leaders, Philani Mavundla (ANC) and Petros Ngubane (IFP) agreed on behalf of their respective parties as follows:

- To work together in promoting peace, and political co-existence of both the IFP and ANC in Greytown (uMvoti) area.

- To make a public apology on behalf of their respective parties in the greater Greytown area, especially families who lost their loved ones and the people of South Africa for a legitimate municipal tension that spilled over into the community and led to the loss of lives.
- To desist from making inflammatory political rhetoric that incites violence and promotes political intolerance, but, rather they will promote peace.
- To begin a process of bilateral talks to identify matters that caused differences and to iron them out.
- They will also lead a process in which their parties communicate with respective members to encourage them to do their best to avoid any resurgence of political violence.
- To hold a workshop convened by the Department of Community Safety & Liaison to map out a framework for a positive working relationship of their parties within uMvoti Municipality. The programme will also encompass the two leaders seen together in strategic public platforms.

End.....Ends

Issued by the Directorate for Media Liaison & Public Relations, on behalf of the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Willie Mchunu

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