



Province of KwaZulu-Natal
Department of Community Safety & Liaison

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: ALL MEDIA
DATE: 05 FEBRUARY 2009
ATTENTION: NEWS EDITORS/ REPORTERS AND PR WIRE

One of the fundamental objectives that govern the existence of the South African Police Service is to prevent crime, maintain law and order and thereby ensuring safety of all citizens in the country. The Executing Authorities furthermore have a constitutional obligation to oversee, monitor and ensure the effective and efficient execution of these duties of the men and women in blue.

The recent acts of violence and intimidation displayed by members of the IFP have been an absolute disgrace and have shown a high level of political immaturity, which is completely disconnected to the standards and principles of a political organization. On the evening of 31 January 2009, Bongani Ngcobo, Chairman of the Nongoma sub-region of the ANC was shot at the ANC offices in Nongoma, in respect of which Mr. Jeremiah B. Mavundla (45), an IFP councillor has since been arrested, appeared in court for attempted murder, assault and public violence and was refused bail.

On 1 February 2009, IFP supporters stoned buses carrying ANC supporters on their way to a rally near Nongoma in KwaZulu-Natal as a result of which 5 people were injured and received treatment by medical doctors. Police officers had been deployed to the town to keep the peace and enforce the law.

The MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison was on the scene and he was able, in compliance with his Constitutional mandate in Section 206 of Chapter 11 of the Constitution, to monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the police response to the erupting violence and communicate with senior police officers in this regard, thereby overseeing appropriate police action to contain the situation and prevent further violence by enforcing the law. This incident was followed by three members of the ANC being ambushed and shot on

their way home from the rally near Nongoma. Mr. Pitso Nyembe (32), a relative of an IFP Councillor, has since been arrested, appeared in court on three counts of attempted murder and was refused bail.

On the morning of 2 February 2009, Mr. Velaphi B. Ndlovu of the Inkatha Freedom Party alleged on Talk Radio 702, in reference to the violent attacks in Nongoma, that the MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, had "... *provoked people by shooting at them with teargas and rubber bullets without any provocation whatsoever ...*" and insisted that he had waved his gun around. This statement was not only broadcast by Talk Radio 702, but also publicized on the Internet.

That same day, President of the IFP, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, released a media statement wherein he denies that IFP supporters were involved in attacks on ANC supporters and depicts the incident simply as a clash between the IFP and the police caused by MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison by his instructions to the police to brutalize the public and grossly interfering with the work of the police. He stated that the MEC had exceeded his Constitutional mandate and normally treats the police as his private fiefdom. He also called the MEC notoriously provocative. This media statement was widely reported on in the media both in the written and electronic press.

Again on 3 February 2009, IFP National Organiser, Mr. Albert Mncwango, indicated to SABC that the MEC forcibly took a gun away from a police officer and pointed it at the crowd. On 4 February 2009, Mr. Mncwango also participated on a panel discussion on the After Eight Debate on SAFM, where he reiterated the allegation that MEC Cele had caused the violence in Nongoma and participated in the violence.

It has since been confirmed with the Office of the MEC that the IFP had no conclusive evidence for their statements. Yet, despite this, the baseless public assault on the reputation, integrity and good name of the MEC, the Department of Community Safety & Liaison and the SAPS continues unabatedly. This is hampering the effective implementation of the Constitutional mandate of monitoring police efficiency and promoting good relations between the police and the community as well as harming all the good work and expense incurred in discharging this mandate since 2004. We therefore call on the IFP to immediately retract these statements and cease making these allegations.

Furthermore, in order for the police to effectively and efficiently prevent crime and enforce the law, the trust and cooperation of the community is essential. The baseless statements by the IFP leadership reduce the trust in the police, thereby adversely affecting the ability of the police to do its job, especially in dealing with the all important containment and prevention of political violence. In itself this political assault on the MEC

increases the tension between the ANC and IFP and inevitably the risk of further political violence, which now would have to be dealt with by a police service hampered by mistrust. Moreover, this public assault has now crossed the line from a professional level to a severe personal attack.

In light of this it is essential for the security in KZN during the election period, the long term stability of law enforcement in the province and the maintenance our Constitutional order that this situation be remedied. The MEC believes fully that Prince Buthelezi was ill-informed by his people and he therefore invites Prince Buthelezi together with his colleagues, Messrs Combrink and Mncwango, to a full briefing for a better understanding on the matter, anywhere and anytime. We shall continue to defend the weak at all times whilst working on providing a better life for all and strongly believing that working together we can do more.

Ends

Issued by the Office of the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison

Media Contact: Nonkululeko Mbatha – 083 645 6252