

MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON, WILLIES MCHUNU' S RESPONSE TO THE MOTION RAISED BY HONOURABLE MEMBER, MAKHOSAZANE MDLALOSE OF DA

Date : 16 September 2010

**HONOURABLE SPEAKER
MEMBERS MEMBER**

Introduction

The present government in its manifesto declared crime as one of its main priority. Farm security is part and parcel of South Africa's overall crime prevention strategy. Honourable Speaker, I must say that this government is determined and doing all it can to reduce crime in the farms and in rural communities. The national Minister of Police **Nathi Mthethwa** outlined key strategic points in fighting crime, mainly in the farms and in rural communities.

1. To improve and enhance service delivery at local station level:

Rural police stations are isolated and police vast areas. There is therefore a strategy to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of police stations in rural areas, and to ensure that local police work in partnership with both rural communities and other government departments responsible for rural development;

2. To increase and improve police visibility in rural areas and to increase the response times of police

This includes the use of reservists in the policing of rural areas.

3. To improve and enhance relationships between the police, farming community, stakeholders and extended rural communities.

The establishment of Community Safety Forums, with the further envisaged establishment of ward committees is central to the current safety strategy of government and in particular, the Province, under our department's 'Building a United Front Against Crime' Flagship Programme. Such forums are intended to create partnerships for enhanced communication including within rural communities, and among all role-players. The integrated approach to crime prevention will ensure that all stakeholders voice their concerns and suggestions on how we can work better, together, to reduce crime priorities

4. To improve safety awareness in rural areas and educate rural communities on safety and security matters.

In its turn, the KZN Department of Community Safety and Liaison has a range of services that are rolled out to rural areas. These Programmes and interventions include Amakhosi and Izinduna Capacity Building in Social Crime Prevention, Youth Training in Crime Prevention and the Communities-in-Dialogue Programme which seeks to mediate community tensions. As the Volunteer Social Crime Prevention Programme (VSCPP) has expanded, more and more volunteers are deployed around the province.

5. In addressing crime generally we have highlighted the need to improve both our intelligence and investigative capacity and this includes our efforts towards rural crimes:

There must be continuous improvements in rural areas in terms of proper investigation of cases and closer cooperation with prosecuting authorities. We also need to enhance our crime intelligence and analysis in rural areas.

THE KZN STRATEGY AND INITIATIVES

The KZN Stock Theft and Loss Coordination Committee

- Provides coordination and liaison between provincial livestock owner representatives and institutional role-players to curtail livestock theft.
- *The Committee's high level plan targets hotspot areas and focuses on:*
 - Education of the farming community on the importance of branding stock and control of the movement of stock;
 - Discouraging of vigilante activities;
 - Capacitating of Stock Theft Units to improve the policing of stock theft;
 - Establishing stock Pounds by Municipalities;
 - Providing emerging farmers with grazing land;
 - Training Prosecutors to deal with stock theft cases through the KZN Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster

The KZN Technical Committee on Farming Communities

- Established by Cabinet decision;
- Led by the Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development, the committee will address all issues affecting farmers, including stock theft and control of cross border movement of stock by closing illegal passes especially along the Drakensberg border;
- The Department of Community Safety and Liaison also evaluates the capacitation of Stock Theft Units.

The KZN SAPS Provincial Priority Committee on Rural Safety and Tourism

- The Committee monitors rural safety threats and devises integrated responses thereto. The Committee's Operational Plan is revised annually. There are also regular deliberations at Cluster and Station level on rural safety;
- The Organised Crime Unit investigates farm –related crimes as a matter of priority.

OPERATION HLAELA: MOOI RIVER

Following the recent brutal murder of three people on Sherwood Farm at Rosetta, near Mooi River on Wednesday, 21 July 2010, the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison visited the farm to pay respect to the deceased and offer condolences to their family and community. The deceased were: Lorraine Karg, the farmer's 58-year-old wife and Zachues Mhlongo, a 66-year-old farm worker who were stabbed and had their throats slit, and Hilda Linyane, a 34-year-old domestic worker who was shot several times in her employer's kitchen. The incident is believed to be an attempted robbery which went wrong.

On arrival at the farm, we found members of the local farming community present consoling the affected families. The MEC then addressed the gathering and made an undertaking to implement an '*Operation Hlasela*' intervention for that farming community. This would be done after a stakeholders' meeting that has been scheduled for 7th of October 2010, where the Premier, MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison and other MEC's will listen to the concerns of the community and solutions would be jointly agreed upon.

The Department of Community Safety and Liaison has been tasked with facilitating the roll-out of *Operation Hlasela* in Mooi River. As with other similar initiatives, a team has been constituted to lead a peace-building and crime prevention initiative for the area. The relevant stakeholders will be drawn in to implement '*Operation Hlasela*' in the area. Proper consultation will be undertaken with all local leadership. Stakeholders will be mobilised to break tensions, allay community fears and mount a concerted crime prevention initiative involving all relevant stakeholders .

What will follow will be the development of a clear Programme of Action for that area.

Conclusion

As with all other crime priorities, as communities and law enforcement agencies and other organs of State increase collaboration and partnerships, we will move towards realising the safe society we are all working so hard to achieve.

Farming communities may rest assured that government and our province in particular, has a strong commitment to eradicating tensions and crime challenges faced by farmers, farm labourers and farm tenants. We have also a clear programme of action which is being unfolded as we speak. All that is needed now is to have the full cooperation of all parties to ensure that all our efforts are not made in vain and that people in KwaZulu-Natal are and feel safe!

Mr T W Mchunu
MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison