



MEDIA ALERT

TO : ALL MEDIA
DATE : 18 June 2013
ATTENTION : NEWS EDITORS/REPORTERS AND PR WIRE

MEC MCHUNU CALLS FOR CALM AND ORDER IN AREAS UNDER ABAQULUSI MUNICIPALITY

KWAZULU-NATAL MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Willies Mchunu, has condemned incidents of vandalism and violence by communities in areas falling under Abaqulusi Municipality, in Vryheid, urging that differences and complaints should be settled peacefully through negotiations and dialogue.

Mchunu was commenting in the wake of several incidents of violence, mayhem and vandalism targeting both the Government and commercial outlets in Bhhekuzulu township, Vryheid and Louwsburg, outside Vryheid, under Abaqulusi Municipality.

In the week of mayhem, among others, the Department of Social Development offices were vandalised together with staff's property being damaged in Louwsburg.

People, purportedly protesting against the employment of outsiders, marched through the streets of this tiny town, burning down municipal offices and looting delivery vehicles.

This has disturbed normal life in the area, unfortunately leading to closure of some of the schools in the affected areas.

Residents in Bhhekuzulu, a township in Vryheid, embarked on a similar activity in the so-called service delivery march.

A total of 40 marchers were arrested by police in Louwsburg and they appeared for bail hearing today (June 18, 2013) at the local court. Protesters allegedly tried to stop the suspects from being loaded into vans and threw stones at police.

More people were arrested at this incident. It is alleged that during the ensuing pandemonium, a young person was knocked by a vehicle and died.

The department regrets this incident.

Mchunu yesterday called for calm, urging protesters to engage in negotiations with authorities to resolve their grievances.

“Acts of violence and mayhem are strongly condemned. No grievance, no matter how big, could justify such behaviour of violence and looting. The unruly behaviour of protesters, accompanied by the incidents of criminality, does no justice to the cause of the protesters. “We urged people to protest peacefully and to engage with authorities in a bid to resolve their complaints,” said Mchunu.

Ends

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