



community safety & liaison

Department :
Community Safety and Liaison
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Private Bag X9143, Pietermaritzburg, 3200
179 Jabu Ndlovu, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: (033) 341 9300 (Switchboard) Fax: (033) 342 6345

MEDIA ALERT

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ATTENTION : NEWS EDITORS/REPORTERS AND PR WIRE

NO CRISIS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN KWAZULU-NATAL- MEC MCHUNU

The MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison in KwaZulu-Natal, Willies Mchunu has assured provincial legislators that the province was facing no crisis of political violence ahead of the 2014 general elections.

Briefing the members of Community Safety and Liaison Portfolio Committee in the legislature in Pietermaritzburg yesterday (14/05/2013), Mchunu said there were only two areas of concern but was satisfied that the police were on top of the situation. Mchunu described the areas of concerns as the Estcourt/Imbabazane precinct in the KZN Midlands and the KwaMashu Hostel, north of Durban. He said the violence in Estcourt/Imbabazane precinct involved same party and the same group of people.

"There is a power struggle within the Imbabazane Municipality brought about by internal problems within the NFP. All investigations so far do not point to attacks of NFP councillors as attacks from the ANC. That is what we have established so far," said Mchunu.

He said these and other forms of violence, emerging within political organisations brought about by issues of internal power struggles, were difficult to deal with as they could not be predicted by anyone. However, Mchunu expressed confidence that police were on top of the situation with several arrests having been made and suspects being brought before the courts.

"Reinforcement of police and strengthening of intelligence activities in the area is underway. As the MEC I have endorsed this move because it is a correct move. Here people are using guerrilla tactics to attack one another. But our resolve to deal with this is now yielding results. We have arrested some people," he said.

The second area of concern, said Mchunu, was KwaMashu Hostel, which has had some upheavals up to the last by-elections held there.

"However, the government - initiated Multi-Party Political Committee, has made interventions in the area to the extent that the last by-elections was declared free and fair," he said.

However, he said, lately there had been another emergence of intra-party violence with an attempt on the life of the IFP councillor that was recently elected. **"But investigations also show here that these attempts on the life of the councillor were not from other party, but fortunately those people who were involved in these attempts were also arrested, including the very same councillor who is now linked with another murder elsewhere. He is now sitting in prison and we are told that this very councillor has been asked to resign. These are two areas that are a problem but again are not a crisis because they are being appropriately attended to,"** said Mchunu.

He said there were other political problems elsewhere, such as the killing of an ANC councillor on the South Coast last year, saying these had arisen as result of power struggles within the parties.

"Our appeal has gone out to all leaders for stability and we are urging them to talk to their members. When leaders talk to their members, they listen. But there will always be areas of concern," he said.

Generally, Mchunu said, the province still had problems as the police had to deal with challenges of taxi violence, tribal/ faction fights and political violence. For instance, he said, police had gone out to conduct raids for illegal guns. **"But the proliferation of arms is still there. Police have their hands full but they are doing their utmost best in the situation,"** he said, adding that well over 200 000 people had been arrested by the police in the past financial year.

He spoke of the need to strengthen community structures in the fight against crime, saying this was the best option towards defeating criminals

MEDIA CONTACT: Kwanele Ncalane on 072 803 1462 or 0796995155