

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JOINT STATEMENT BETWEEN TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON AND EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS ON THE SAFETY AND EDUCATION ISSUES AT KWADENGE HIGH SCHOOL

THE KZN Provincial Government has vowed to beef up security around the troubled kwaDenge High School in Nongoma with a number of interventions, including negotiating for the deployment of crack police units to stabilise the area.

These include leading the initiatives to mobilise communities around the school to set up community crime fighting structures and working closely with the police and Education Department to set up the school's Safety Committee.

Also, the government has committed itself to moving swiftly to deal with the problem of overcrowding at the school by bringing in five prefabricated classrooms by next week. This will be followed by the arrival of architects who will conduct a study on how to improve the school's infrastructure.

These commitments were made today by the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Willies Mchunu, and Education MEC, Peggy Nkonyeni, during a visit to the school where they met and addressed the school's administration, parents and pupils.

Last year, Denge High School was nearly plunged into anarchy after three male learners were knocked by a car on the R618 road while on their way home from school. One learner died while two sustained injuries. Later, one of the injured committed suicide.

The incident triggered anger, as community members blocked the road, demanding speed humps and the Department of Transport constructed them after two weeks.

However, the learners and the community marched to the school, attacking the principal, who was accused of being a Satanist. During the rampage, school windows were broken while a teacher and two cars were pelted with stones. One teacher was also killed during one of the attacks at the school.

In his address today, Mchunu said there was normally a huge coloration between the condition of the school and the surrounding community.

“If the school is situated in a dysfunctional community that is ravaged by crime and the abuse of alcohol and drugs, the school is likely to be impacted negatively. To deal with the challenges of this school, we will be leading initiatives to set up local crime fighting structures. Equally, we will be working

with the Department of Education and the police to set up school safety structures,” said Mchunu.

He urged the local community to work with the police to stabilise the area and bring order to the school.

MEC Nkonyeni expressed concerns about the physical condition of the school, saying her department would immediately attend to the issue of overcrowding and the general improvement of the school’s infrastructure.

“In the meantime, we will be providing five prefabricated classrooms. On Monday (18 January 2016), architects will be visiting the school to conduct a study on how to better improve the general infrastructure, including the recreational facilities.

“On the other wish lists of the school’s management, we will soon meet with officials to see what could be done,” said Nkonyeni.

She praised the school’s teaching staff, saying it had produced good results despite working under very difficult conditions.

“We are convinced that had the school not been destabilised by destructive elements, it would have produced a better pass percentage,” Nkonyeni said.

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