

**SPEECH NOTES FOR THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND LIAISON AT THE MEETING WITH COMMUNITY CRIME FIGHTING
STRUCTURES ON 15 AUGUST 2011 AT THE DURBAN ICC**

Programme Director;
Leadership of the SAPS;
Leadership of various community crime fighting structures;
Leadership of CPF;
Senior Officials of Government Departments;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

We take this opportunity to thank you for having honoured our invitation to this meeting although we understand that it was at short notice. To me, your presence here is a reflection of your incredible will to work together with us in the fight against crime.

When we started this financial year 2011/2012, as the KZN Department of Community Safety and Liaison, we declared this as the year for the '**People's Action Against Crime**'.

We have a strong belief that we cannot win the war against crime unless members of the community actively take a bold stand and do something, whether in their homes, their streets or throughout their neighborhoods.

We are of the view that as Government if we work without your co-operation, we will never win this war.

To that effect, we understand that some in our communities have, as individuals or as organizations, stood up and mobilized themselves for crime prevention. We want to commend that because indeed crime affects us all.

A couple weeks ago at Umlazi F Section, Mr Mfaniseni Duma was shot dead by a criminal while he was trying to assist a young girl who was being robbed. He dropped what he was doing when the girl asked for help but unfortunately that was the end of his life. As Government we are committed to assist his love-ones because to us his action was that of a hero.

I have a belief that had Duma not been alone he would not have died because had other men been around they would have been alerted to the young person's screams and would have done something to ensure that the criminal has no way out.

Therefore, while we commend Duma's actions, we also ask ourselves how many other brave men like him are out there? Who among us can sacrifice their lives to protect their communities?

I am worried by some men who simply look through their windows when they hear a neighbour screaming and once they see that something is happening they lock themselves inside the house. We wish to have more heroes like Duma in our communities so that we can close the net for criminals.

However, having you here today gives me hope that we still have brave people who want to protect communities from crime and criminals. Your presence here gives me confidence that we still have people who are concerned about our country.

I also maintain hope that we still have mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters who are not cowards.

We understand that some of you work under so much pressure as we are facing heavily armed criminals. We know that some of you are volunteers who are

determined to help our communities but have to contend with a shortage of resources.

It is therefore that we called this meeting today as a platform to share our experiences and become acquainted with one another better. This will give us an opportunity to re-align the work of community organizations dealing with crime prevention in the province.

In addition to that, our meeting today will provide an opportunity to evaluate our work and explore where we have benefited as well as produce means and tools for sticking to that as we move forward.

It quite often that we read about members of community crime prevention structures who are arrested because they take the law into their own hands.

It is our wish that by the end of this meeting, incidents like those will not happen again. We must discuss and share ideas of better ways for apprehending criminals as communities.

It becomes unfortunate when a member of the community is arrested because he/she has broken the law by killing a person while trying to apprehend a criminal.

It is important to note that we as citizens of this country are bound and protected by rule of law. That is why even if you attempt to apprehend a criminal and he is killed in the process, you will be investigated and charged because someone has died.

As Government, we are not against the arrest of criminals by communities but we must find ways of doing this without breaking the laws of the country.

There are still cases that are under investigation by the police concerning your activities and in other communities there is an outcry about the way some of the crime fighting structures are handling cases.

This meeting will provide us with opportunities of looking at other ways to ensure that our practices are within the confines of the law and it is vital that we educate communities about how you operate for them to be able to place their trust in you.

That is why it is important for us to meet and discuss with you who are in the firing line of the war since it happens in the communities you live in.

What is good about you is that since you are from these communities there are many opportunities of knowing who the culprits are.

What we need most is the cooperation between the communities who are crime fighters and the police.

I say this because your success will only be determined by your cooperation with the police as well as the cooperation the police have with you and the communities at large.

That is why tomorrow we will be hosting a provincial summit on police killings.

We strongly believe that, as the communities, it is upon us to protect the police from the criminals. We should not be the ones who alert the culprits about the police because that is another factor that endangers the lives of the police. Those who provide shelters for the criminals are no different from them.

The Government is prepared to work with you to win the fight against crime. That is why we have introduced a united front against crime called 'Operation Hlasela'.

This Operation Hlasela is aimed at mobilizing all individuals and community structures to work together in the fight against crime.

Under this Operation, the Department of Community Safety and Liaison has started the programme of restructuring CPF's.

We have completed recommendations of restructuring our Department to ensure that it can be line with the District Municipalities to make the fight against crime in our communities easier. We believe that for us to overcome this fight we first need to focus on the communities where most of this crime happens.

We do this because our experience has revealed that these structures are not properly placed and it is up to us to rectify them to be able to function properly.

A CPF should not be comprised of a group of people who are friends or who come from the same organisation but it should be comprised of different community structures to ensure that it functions objectively.

Should the relationship between the police, the Government and you as communities be strengthened, I do not see any criminal that will walk free in KwaZulu-Natal. We need to strengthen our effort to win against crime and criminals. We need to strengthen people's action to prevent police killings.

Thank You.