

**MESSAGE OF SUPPORT BY KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT,  
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE  
PROVINCIAL CONGRESS OF POPCRU ON TUESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER  
2011 IN NEWCASTLE.**

Programme Director;  
Provincial leadership of POPCRU;  
All members;  
Distinguished guests;  
Ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for allowing me to join you here today and have an opportunity to share our experiences as agents of law and order in our province.

Ladies and gentlemen, because of our full realisation of the negative and destructive impact crime has in the lives of our people, government has prioritised the fight against crime. This is one of the challenges we must confront without any compromise.

I find it appropriate that I should use this congress to give necessary recognition and praise to our brave members who always put their lives on the line just to ensure that peace and stability prevails. We acknowledge you for your daunting task because you put your personal wellbeing on the line for the rest of us.

You are in the forefront of the fight for the safety of our communities, for the protection of our homes, properties, businesses and for the security of our families, more especially our children and women.

As we all know by now, crime statistics for the period covering the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2010 to the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2011 were released by the National Minister of Police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2011. South Africa's overall crime statistics have decreased for the second consecutive year.

KwaZulu-Natal saw decreases in all serious crime types though it performed badly in the areas of drug-related crime and commercial crime.

KwaMashu, which had the highest murder rate two years ago, has seen an enormous reduction in murders from 235 in the previous period to 78 in the latest report. Likewise, other previous problematic Stations such as Umlazi, Pinetown, Inanda, and Phoenix, saw decreases in most crimes - with the exception of house robberies which more than doubled in Umlazi and saw significant increases in most areas.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am touching on this because it is one of the measures we use to see how we are progressing each year in the fight against crime and criminality.

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Community Safety and Liaison has a constitutional political responsibility to monitor the police conduct, to oversee the effectiveness and efficiency of the police service, including receiving reports on the police service and to assess the effectiveness of visible policing, amongst other things.

I am also aware of the fact that this congress is attended by members from various law enforcement agencies.

But unfortunately, it comes at a time when the province and indeed the whole country, is facing very serious challenges as we continue to mourn the deaths of our members from the South African Police Service (SAPS). It comes when it is becoming common to have news reports on police officers that have been slain.

It has been established that policing in this country is under threat because of violence directed at the police. The high number of murdered police officers recently indicates that the situation is out of hand.

To that end, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2011, the provincial Community Safety and Liaison Department hosted a Summit on Police Killings which was aimed at addressing the high number of attacks and the brutal killing of SAPS members. The summit was subsequent to the National Summit which was hosted by National Minister Mthethwa, in July this year.

Following the deliberations at the Provincial Summit, recommendations were made on how to reduce police murders and they are as follows:

1. To protect our Protectors, the Police through a slogan that says: - “If it is to be, it is up to me”.
2. Rebuild relations between the Police and our Communities.
3. We must investigate the strengthening of our Legislation - especially in so far as it relates to those who kill the police members.
4. Spouses/partners of Police to be work-shopped on their rights as well as what is expected conduct on their part.
5. We must find a way of identifying the rotten potatoes within the Police Force, and deal with them harshly, instead of condemning the whole force for the wrongs of a few amongst them.
6. Our Justice Crime Prevention and Security Cluster must work vigorously to ensure that the processes of the components of our Criminal Justice System, function effectively and optimally.
7. Our campaign against Police Killings must be taken to communities through rallies.
8. A ribbon symbolizing “Anti-Police Killing” must be formulated.

9. Media must be intensively used as a medium to educate the people on the processes of the Criminal Justice System. It must be discouraged from publicly displaying too much graphic material of the dead.
10. We must promote Campaigns in opposition to bail for Police killers as well as all other murderers.
11. We must all take full responsibility for the monitoring of the abuse of state vehicles by Police and others.
12. Training of Police and Community Leaders on Human Rights and Democratic values must be conceptualized.
13. All necessary steps to protect Police must be strengthened by the Department of Police and Government as a whole.

As the political head of the Department of Community Safety and Liaison, I am pleased that we have been able to make several important interventions to promote peace in this province, which our past history has painted as amongst the most violent places in the world.

The Department, working together with the police, also plays a leading role in the promotion of peace, democracy and social cohesion through the Communities in Dialogue Programme, as evidenced in a number of areas.

You will remember that in March this year, ahead of the Local Government Elections, Provincial Government led by the Premier Dr Zweli Mkhize, staged an important summit that featured political leaders from all political parties in the Province, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Police, as well as the traditional and the religious leaders.

That meeting resulted in the formation of a Multi- party committee which I am privileged to be leading together with other leaders who are representing various political parties in our province. We then identified areas that were regarded as hot spots and needed our intervention.

It is now history that the IEC declared elections in this province as having been free and fair in all areas, including those that had been identified as hot spots. The committee has now agreed to continue with its work as a build up to the 2014 general elections.

In the recent past we have been able to organize prayer gatherings involving supporters of the various political organizations. What is interesting is that the taxi industry is also coming on board. We have already had a massive prayer gathering in the Ilembe District following the latest developments that involved peace agreements among taxi associations.

I also stand here before you as the political head of the KZN Department of Transport. The core function of this Department is to ensure that people have access, i.e. roads and bridges, but more importantly, it is also our business to ensure that people are safe on these roads.

It is for this reason that this Department has over the years launched a number of road safety initiatives. Road accidents and fatalities deprive us of our children and breadwinners whom we expect to play a major role in supporting their families and building this nation.

Statistics show us that this country is experiencing more than 16 000 road fatalities which cost an estimated R56 billion annually that is spent on medical and legal expenses.

In view of this, we have set up an Integrated Traffic Law Enforcement Committee (ITLEC) that is working towards the attainment of the goal of preventing road crashes and offences that lead to fatalities on our roads.

The major role players in this initiative are the Provincial Department of Transport, Ethekwini Metro Police and the various Municipalities. This Committee will drive the integrated provincial traffic enforcement initiatives and programmes as well as engage in continuous research aimed at finding new ways to curb the high levels of road accidents and fatalities.

We want to see vigorous enforcement of traffic laws in all areas including the rural areas, townships and cities. We want to ensure that we focus our attention on road safety 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

That is from the perspective of law enforcement. But to us as organized labour, it is important that each one of us show our commitment to road safety by supporting these campaigns by being traffic law abiding citizens because safety on the road begins with you. Let us all agree that today we are forming a partnership that will take us to the festive season and beyond.

Once again, I take this opportunity to thank the leadership and all members of POPCRU for giving me this platform. As I indicated earlier, one of our priorities in the current administration under the leadership of President Jacob Zuma is fighting against crime and corruption.

Therefore, as members you must be determined to root out all criminal behaviour within and outside our respective organisations. Remember that your behaviour can either invite or chase away potential offenders. Never indulge yourselves into corrupt practices like bribery.

Finally, on behalf of our government, I would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to all of you who have continuously remained true partners in the fight against crime and criminals in our society.

**I thank you.**