

ADDRESS BY KZN MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON AND ANC DEPUTY CHAIR, COMRADE WILLIES MCHUNU AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF COMRADE SBU SIBIYA, CITY HALL, DURBAN, 14 JULY 2011

Programme Director;

The Sibiya family and relatives present;

Comrades and compatriots;

Friends and fellow South African citizens.

It is gatherings of this nature that always make us wonder why life is sometimes so cruel. I am sure that this is the question most of us ask ourselves today. I know that the Sibiya family, the members and the leadership of the ANC as well as community members who are passionate about peace and social cohesion, have all asked this question since the passing away of comrade Sbu Sibiya on Monday night.

Even if we are not yet able to tell what the motive of his murder was, but it is very unfortunate that people like him should lose their lives in the hands of cold-blooded criminals in an area known as Congo in Inanda where development activists are needed the most.

I know that too much has been said since our comrade was murdered and speculations are rife as to the motive thereof. But as the provincial leadership of both Government and the ANC, we want to urge our people to let the police do their job.

We know that this incident comes after one of our leaders in the Ethekwini Region, Comrade Wiseman Mshibe, was also murdered in a similar attack ahead of the recent local government elections. Even there too, we appealed to our people to give the police a chance to do their work.

While we are saddened by the loss of our comrade, this must be the time to refuse to be discouraged and regain more strength than before and not allow ourselves to be intimidated by masked forces of darkness. This is the time for members of the ANC to be strong and work towards achieving our Government's mandate.

Maybe as tears roll down our cheeks due to sadness and shock, we also need to allow ourselves to celebrate the life and contribution of comrade Sbu and say: it is now left with us to think beyond our individual interests and realise that our actions as a collective translate into the type of society we desire to live in.

A task team specializing on political violence cases has begun its investigation into who did this and why our beloved Comrade was gunned down in this gruesome manner. We therefore call upon all our branches and regions in the province to assist in this investigation.

We know that most of our people now want to move forward. We have seen that by the level of maturity they demonstrated during local government elections. They co-operated very well with the multi-party task team that was formed by the Premier Comrade Zweli Mkhize to promote political tolerance, unity, peace, freedom of choice, expression and association, before, during and beyond elections.

We are happy to note that despite ugly incidents like these, on the whole, at long last, the political environment of our province has moved away from the politics of confrontation, conflict and violence, to the politics of dialogue, mutual understanding, respect and cooperation.

In our recent review meeting as the multi-party committee, we agreed that even if elections have come and gone, the task team will continue with its work, as a build-up to the 2014 general elections. We must also remember that during their term of office, the councils will be having by-elections now and then.

We are also looking for leads in the rumours that some people are planning political assassinations so that there will be by-elections. All this calls for the task team to be observant. Police cannot be alone in this. We are once again challenged to maximise the capacity of our people-orientated structures to identify and pass on any information that will lead to minimising such criminal acts.

We shall not take the law into our own hands. As a ruling party, we are in government and will therefore not dare undermine the police and the legal structures that are there to deal with such challenges, but we will support, respect and cooperate with them to the best of our ability.

I therefore take this opportunity to call upon our youth to prepare themselves to be leaders of our country. How you behave yourselves as future leaders will determine how you reach your goal of leading a nation whose quality of life has been degraded by centuries of colonial and apartheid neglect and brutality. Are we going to make matters worse, or are we going to lead our people out of a life of violence, poverty, deprivation and unemployment?

The ANC is regarded as an institution with structures that have a potential to engage and develop politically. But I must also warn you that as you develop politically, you must refer to history. You must learn from the good aspects of our history and shy away from the bad things about our history

because our choices will determine how we shape our contemporary history which is history in the making.

Do not forget that some of our young people died and others rot in jail because of our history. As we speak, the Government is still dealing with amnesty issues for political prisoners in the province and in the country. A huge bulk of those is the youth of KZN.

Today Comrades, we are bidding farewell to one of us who advocated for justice for the poor and the vulnerable. The ANC prides itself that within its ranks, it produced one of the most respected and progressive cadre in Comrade Sbu. The ANC salutes the sacrifices made by Comrade Sbu for what he endured in order for us to enjoy democracy and freedom.

His role as the secretary of the Ethekewini regional branch cannot be replaced, but we shall pick up the spear and soldier on in the same way as we did when we lost our revolutionary leader Chris Hani who, like the African American Civil Rights Leader, Martin Luther King Jnr, did not see the promised land as they were both assassinated just before they could taste the fruit of their sweat. We won the local government election but fate prevented you from being part of the collective that will take the process forward.

At this stage we can only say: *Hamba kahle*, Comrade Sbu – indeed “the tree of liberty is watered with the blood of martyrs.”

The ANC in KZN therefore thanks the Sibiyana family for giving us a revolutionary leader who died fighting for justice and a better life for all.

Amandla!

I thank you.