

**Address by MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Willies Mchunu at the media briefing to introduce the new Head of Department for the Department of Community Safety and Liaison and to reflect on developments taking place in the province.**

**Venue : Committee room 1, KZN legislature**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the media, may I, once again, take this opportunity to welcome and thank you for coming to this media briefing. This briefing is a platform to offer us an opportunity to share with you developments and progress on the work of our department.

We value this session because it is through this partnership with you members of the media that we can be able to successfully wage the battle against crime and criminals.

We called today's media briefing to introduce our new Head of Department for Community Safety and Liaison and also to share with you some developments in our province.

Mr Vusumuzi Ronald Bhengu officially started as a new HOD on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2011.

He brings to the department, and indeed to the province, a wealth of experience and understanding on criminal justice system and intelligence environment.

I have no doubt that his knowledge and understanding will help this department to achieve its mandate of making KwaZulu-Natal safe.

## **Qualifications**

Mr Bhengu possesses a Master of Art in Pedagogics which he obtained from the University of Sofia, Bulgaria.

He also has qualifications in Project Management from Ede, Netherlands.

## **Experience**

He has been working in sectors of higher education as a tutor in the former University of Natal where he was training trainers on participatory methods of instruction.

He also worked as a head of the Financial Aid Bureau at the former Technikon Natal.

He has also worked as a Co – Manager in the Kagiso Trust bursary programme.

Some of his experience involves working as a Head of Financial Aid Bureau and a part time lecturer in former Northern Gauteng Technikon.

Mr Bhengu worked for the national coordinating committee for the repatriation of South African exiles as an education officer for the Natal region.

He also worked in UN, Geneva and in the South African Embassy in Cuba as a diplomat.

His appointment as well as his experience is also in line with our vision for the Department of Community Safety and Liaison to ensure that : “The People of KwaZulu-Natal Live in a Safe and secure Environment”.

On behalf of the Department and the entire Government of KwaZulu-Natal, I also want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the out-gone HOD, Ms Yasmin Bacus.

We thank her for her contribution in improving the lives and safety of the people of KwaZulu-Natal. I wish her all the best in her future endeavor.

### **Crime statistics**

Ladies and gentlemen of the media, may I also take this opportunity to reflect on the recent crime statistics released by the National Minister of Police, Honorable Nathi Mthethwa.

As the government of KwaZulu-Natal we welcome the fact that crime is declining in the province.

This alone proves that the partnership we are talking about between the police and communities is the only weapon to defeat crime and criminals.

#### **1. Murder**

Even though KwaZulu-Natal is leading with murder cases in the country, we are however pleased with a reasonable decline of such cases.

Compared to the 2009/2010 murder cases dropped from 4 224 to 3 749. To us this indicates progress and a positive picture.

We are however concerned that the areas of Ntuzuma and iNanda are leading on cases of murder.

Together with the provincial commissioner General Ngobeni, I will meet with the station commanders of all the station with a high record, especial of murder cases, so as to device a way forward and our intervention as a collective.

#### **2. Sexual Crimes**

More still needs to be done with woman abuse and sexual related crimes. Even though there is an improvement from 13 269 during the financial year 2009/2010 to 12 793 in previous financial year, we believe most cases of this nature are not reported to the police.

We therefore appeal to our communities to report such crime to the police because they have a long term implications on victims.

### **3. Illegal possession of fire arms**

It is very concerning that- 5072 cases of illegal fire arms were recorded in the financial year under review.

This indicates that people in KwaZulu-Natal are very armed. There is also another side of this because it says we are slowly winning in our campaign to collect illegal fire arms.

We will intensify our campaigns, interacting with communities to voluntary return these fire arms.

### **4. Car hijacking**

We are pleased that car hijackings have dropped from 3 715 to 2 619. This is a major improvement.

In all these crimes, we want to assure the people of KwaZulu-Natal that we won't rest until our province is free from all criminal activities.

We also thank the people of KwaZulu-Natal for their support and partnership because we have always said that government alone can not succeed in defeating crime.

It is for this reason that we declared 2011 a year of – **people's action against crime**.

We believe that community mobilization and community structures, accompanied by people centered programmes, are key in fighting crime and criminals.

### **Multi-Party Political Committee on Elections**

The Hon Premier, Dr Zweli Mkhize established a Multiparty Political Oversight Committee on Local Government Elections to promote a peaceful, free and fair 2011 Municipal Election led by the MEC for Community Safety and Liaison. It included the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the

Independent Electoral Commission, the Police, as well as other Criminal Justice System Structures. It also included political party leaders.

The Committee adopted a model of facilitating political leadership dialogue in conflict ridden areas directly. This involves the participation of traditional leaders, leaders of political parties, the business sector and faith-based leaders. 100% cooperation was received in all areas visited and outlined below resulting in peaceful, free and fair elections:

- 14 March 2011: Durban, Truro House,
- 21 March 2011: Estcourt/ Mbabazane precinct,
- 28 March 2011: Ulundi/ Nongoma precinct on,
- 4 April 2011 : Msinga/ Greytown precinct
- 11 April 2011 : Maphumulo/ KwaDukuza/ Mandeni
- 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011 : Durban Hostels
- 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2011: Mkhambathini / Camperdown Precinct

The interventions culminated in a unique Provincial Prayer Day on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of May 2011, which is unprecedented in the whole country. The full cooperation and participation of all major political parties and their members in this event, wearing their political party regalia and singing and dancing together was the strongest display of political cohesion and political tolerance. The Committee intends to continue its work until complete peace and tolerance is achieved. On 2 September 2011 the first prayer rally post local government elections was held in Loskop under Estcourt/Mbabazane precinct

The committee has taken note of several incidents recently where people are killed in different parts of the Province. What has emerged, however, is that even before the police conclude their investigation and find the motive behind the killing, political parties tend to claim those as their members who are murdered for political reasons.

We call on political leaders at all levels to be cautious and refrain from making statements that will create an impression that a particular killing is politically motivated because that could affect the investigation processes by police. We must remember that where there is political intolerance, criminals will also capitalize.

## **Anti Police Killings Campaign**

On 16 August 2011, the Province of KwaZulu-Natal held a Summit on Police Killings at the INkosi Albert Luthuli Convention Centre in Durban, under the theme, "Activism Against Police Killings".

That was subsequent to a national summit on police killings which had been hosted by the Minister of Police Mr Nathi Mthethwa on 8 July 2011.

The summit was well attended by over 700 delegates from various sectors of our community.

The main objective of the summit was to identify the causes of police killings so as to find solutions as a collective in addressing this scourge.

The summit effectively emerged with a Partnership Against Police Killings to which all delegates committed not only to be part of, but also to be activists in advancing the cause for the fight against crime. Delegates to the summit committed themselves to this pledge. The Department is now in the position to table before Cabinet the resolutions of the Summit that will serve as a basis for the development of a shared strategy to fight against Police Killings in the Province under the theme, "***if it is to be, it is up to me***".

It is unacceptable that since the beginning of this year we have lost 16 police officers in the province. We are calling all our communities to defend the police.

## **Conclusion**

Once again, I thank you members of the media for honouring our invitation to this briefing. We call upon all our media houses to come on board and ensure that together we win the battle against criminals.

**I thank you**