

ADDRESS BY THE MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON, MR. MXOLISI KAUNDA, ON MEETING PROVINCIAL HEADS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES, AT THE WESTVILLE CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CENTRE, DURBAN, 29 NOVEMBER 2017

- Programme Director;
- Mayors present;
- The Regional Commissioner of Correctional Services in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr. Nxele;
- The Acting Provincial Commissioner of Police, Major-General Langa;
- The Head of Department of Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Mavundla;
- The Head of Department of Transport, Mr. Gumbi;
- Members of the JCPS cluster;
- Heads of the various units of the SAPS; Cluster and Station Commanders;
- The Provincial Traffic Law Enforcement Commanders, including heads of the Department of Transport's Road Traffic Inspectorate, the Public Transport Enforcement Services;
- Representatives of the National Traffic Police;
- Heads of municipal traffic police authorities;
- All Transport Fraternity Stakeholders present;
- Officials of Government; and
- Members of the media.

Ladies and Gentlemen; please receive my warm greetings this morning. You are all welcome to this gathering, which I have called for us to discuss our province's state of readiness for the imminent Festive Season.

We want to use this day to tighten our plans and strategies to ensure that all citizens at home, in their townships and villages, in the towns and cities, on the road, as well as at various gatherings and events are safe, during this festive season – and beyond.

It is our considered and indeed strong view that we must mount a collective battle and be united in the fight against all forms of crime, which terrorise our communities.

It is also our well-told belief that only when we appreciate, and begin to take action, as a collective, that we can see a substantial reduction in the road crashes and fatalities, that kill so many of our beloved friends, colleagues and members of our families.

In short, all the ambitious plans we have put together, and the accompanying bold measures we seek to roll out in fighting the scourges of road crashes and crime, require our collective will, efforts and action.

This gathering is historic, because it is for the very first time that we convene a meeting of all heads of enforcement agencies in the province to discuss matters pertaining to our environment, and ultimately ensuring that we are planning together.

This is a living testimony of your commitment and resolve to make a difference in your areas of employment and deployment.

However, I need to firstly express my gratitude and appreciation on behalf of the Provincial Executive Council to all members of all units present, who have, throughout the year, demonstrated loyalty to service and have gone beyond the call of duty in serving our people.

On the same note, can I request this house to rise and observe a moment silence for all enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty....!

Ladies and gentlemen, as the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) responsible for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison in the province, I am constitutionally obliged to ensure integration of all work streams within the cluster. I am also enjoined by law to ensure that we all work as a collective to honour our mandate of safe and security of our province.

This gathering therefore must not confuse you, because we are all required to work with a "unity of purpose" to be decisive, efficient and effective in the execution of our duties.

Every day when you wake up and go to work, you must be mindful of the fact that our communities are heavily relying on you for their safety.

It means the police are the primary shield between our law abiding, innocent civilians and heavily armed criminals, who are always prepared to discharge merciless and maximum brutality.

This is equally true for traffic officers, who during this season, who have to ensure that road users – from motorists to cyclists, pedestrians, and passengers – do not die in massive numbers from largely avoidable crashes. We all know now that what we are confronted with in this province and country are not "accidents" by avoidable crashes that have escalated into mass killers. Road crashes account for a substantial number of the "trauma statistics", which make up the top four biggest killers in our country – together with communicable diseases; non-communicable diseases and maternal deaths.

For those who may not have pondered the statistics, as per Statistics South Africa, consider this:

- Approximately 14 000 people die on South African roads annually;
- This amounts to 70 000 people who die in five years; and
- 140 000 people who die in 10 years!

For the longest time now, KwaZulu-Natal has accounted for the biggest number of road deaths in the country, especially during the peak Easter and Festive Season holiday periods. We should be concerned – individually and as a collective.

When it comes to murder and other serious crimes, places including KwaMashu, Inanda and Pinetown, are mentioned as leaders in the country. It does not help our province that the so-called "politically-related murders" are also giving us a bad name, to the extent that the Premier had to establish a Commission of Inquiry, which is currently in place!

Through the Justice Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) cluster; a high level Integrated Festive Season Safety Plan was developed, discussed and approved by all stakeholders. Subsequently, the plan was endorsed by the Provincial Executive Council led by the Premier.

Without doubt, the team that has put together this plan is a highly capable team and has made all due considerations of the environment we are operating in, including the dynamics faced by our province.

I must, however, emphasise that any plan that is not implemented is as good as non-existent. It is for this reason that we convened this meeting to develop practical measures to solicit your inputs and ensure that you own this plan.

We have asked various units to be present so that once the plan is presented in front of all of us, we are able to make inputs, and go back to implement with boldness and determination. The plan will ensure increased visibility and sustainability in all corners of the province.

We must make law-breakers feel the presence and might of the law.

The plan is mainly focusing on integrated planning and forges cooperation across all law enforcement agencies and role-players, including other agencies and municipalities. We have to work together and cooperatively in the fight against crime and the road carnage. The plan is premised on the following pillars:

- Aggravated/ Armed Robberies (Trio Crimes);
- Firearms, Liquor and Second Hands Goods, Safety at Sports and Recreational Act Enforcement;
- Crime Against Women and Children as well as Persons with Disability;
- Enforcement of by-laws, including hijacked buildings, and unlawful sale of fire crackers;
- Road safety enforcement;
- Border security;
- Rural safety; and
- Fighting against police killings.

Policing matters

Programme director, allow me to commend the police under the stewardship of Major-General Langa for the excellent work they are doing. This province is unique as it is sometimes engulfed by politically-related killings, faction fights and other forms of crimes.

We also wish to commend interventions in other critical areas, where major breakthroughs have been achieved.

We are still concerned at the level of convictions in some of the cases. To this end, we appeal to the task teams working in those case to do justice in terms of ensuring effective investigations that lead to successful prosecutions and convictions.

I know there is also the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) present here today – but I wish to reiterate in their presence that police must not die with guns in their hands.

When suspects refuse to surrender, but opt to open fire against our police members; the police, in return, naturally have to protect their lives and those of innocent civilians. We are not encouraging you (the police) to be trigger-happy and to abuse your power, but all we are saying is: **refuse to die in the hands of criminals!**

Major-General Langa; I have also undertaken to conduct random visits to all police stations in the province. In some cases I have met arrogant and unprofessional police officers, who are ill-threatening us as members of the public. I have reported all these stations to the police management for it to take corrective action. Commendably, in some instances, I have come across very humble and dedicated police officers, who are serving people with humility and

dedication. I have also been doing this even in the Department of Transport's testing stations.

We also commend the bold steps taken against 12 police members in Golela and Kosi Bay, who were colluding with criminals.

The decision to expel them is important in sending the message that we will not tolerate bad apples within our ranks. We are serious about cleaning the system, and ensure that serving our communities with responsiveness, humility and dedication become the order of the day.

A further two officers were arrested in Nkwalini for involvement in a stock theft syndicates. More are being investigated for various crimes, and we would want to see drastic actions taken against them. These officers are arrested by law abiding police officers among you, who have resolved to fight crime within your ranks.

Indeed this is what we want, if we are to build a safer, cohesive and better communities that are a pleasure to live in for all citizens.

We have also invited the Visible Policing Unit to be part of this planning session. We want to intensify the visibility of police in our communities, especially in hotspot areas during this festive season.

We do not want police officers to be boardroom office-bound people. Instead, we want them on the ground, conducting patrols at all given hours to ensure the safety of our communities. We want to welcome the formation of the crime combating team based at the provincial and cluster levels, which will assist with urgent reinforcement.

We urge members of the police to refuse being labelled as "*abafana bakadrink*" known for accepting bribes. A true police officer, worth their salt and uniform, must serve with dignity and commitment to the country and its people.

Programme director; we need to tackle crime head-on.

Whilst the recently released crime statistics are pointing to the decrease in some categories of crime, mainly contact crime, there are areas which are of great concern.

Contact crimes have over the past five years decreased, but murder and robbery with aggravating circumstances are showing an increase. Over the past financial year, the latest **figure of murder is 4 014**, which is showing an increase of **2.2 percent**. Compared to the previous figures, the **murder rate has increased by 85 murders**. This has been the most stubborn crime, which has been increasing year on year. The most problematic police stations which recorded high cases of murder are:

- Inanda;
- Umlaza;
- KwaMashu E;
- Plessislaer;
- Mpumalanga;
- Ntuzuma;
- KwaDukuza;
- Mountain Rise;
- Chatsworth; and
- Marriannahill.

The question we must answer today, is what are we going to do with these areas come the festive season and beyond? In addition, we must also enhance our plans of dealing with other hotspot areas such as:

- KwaNongoma;
- Ladysmith;
- Esigodini (Edendale);
- Umzimkhulu;
- Richmond;
- Umsinga (Pomeroy); and
- Maphumulo.

Some of these areas are experiencing high levels of crime, because of instability in the taxi industry. There is therefore a great need of cooperation between structures within the intelligence community to proactively intervene in some of these areas before incidents of crime occur. We also need to go beyond *izinkabi* (hit-men), and arrest the masterminds, who are the plotters and funders who live to kill.

As we approach the festive season, we also need to deal with the proliferation of firearms in the community. We must attend all community gatherings and search for all suspicious elements.

We need to intensify the "cordon-and-search" operations to address the issue of drugs and to look for most wanted criminals.

All these plans will not succeed if we leave behind our communities and their structures. The Community Policing Forum (CPF), KwaZulu-Natal Community Crime Fighting Association (KZN-CCPA) and other community initiatives are very important in sharpening our intelligence and getting first-hand information on the situation on the ground.

Traffic Enforcement

We have called all commanders from enforcement within the Department of Transport, municipalities and representatives from the National Traffic Police. We want you to be part of this plan. We wish to build strong working relations between all agencies involved here, because traffic violations is also a matter of life and death.

There is a strong need within traffic enforcement to plan and work together. It is a disappointing to sometimes see that RTI is staging a road block on the one side, and the municipality is doing its own on the other side, and none has communicated with the other.

Equally, the SAPS at station and cluster levels must integrate and assist with traffic enforcement. This is more important in clamping down on stolen vehicles, counterfeit goods, movement of drugs as well as drinking and driving.

On this note as well, we must commend those traffic officers who have been working hard during the year. We say to them: your actions have saved lives of innocent people. Continue with your good work.

Likewise, I will be visiting your operations to see if indeed you are working in those operations. I will also be extending invitations to mayors and other key stakeholders to

participate so that we all elevate the issue of safety on the road across and beyond the government sector.

Together with the Department of Health we are addressing the main frustration around the issue of nurses and blood-drawing in our operations. I have directed the Head of Department to urgently attend to this matter and come up with workable solutions.

We have issued clear directives for this festive season – and beyond:

- No traffic officer should spend hours at a mall during work hours;
- No traffic officer should spend time on social media during work hours;
- No vehicle must escape without being stopped and checked;
- All drivers must be tested for alcohol;
- We want roadblocks 24x7 across the province; and
- We want sustained operations in accident and crash hotspots.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish we can all appreciate the importance of working together for a common vision and purpose. I have no doubt that if we work together we will save thousands of lives in this province, starting in this festive season, and going beyond.

The deployment of more than **27 000 personnel** from the integrated agencies during this period must be complimented by our resolve to make a meaningful difference. We also need to work on an integrated reporting tool that will ensure consistency in how we capture and report information.

The plan will be tabled here and we expect you to discuss it and make informed inputs and valuable comments. All of these must be made in order to ensure that come the end of the festive season, this province will not be counted amongst the top when it comes to crime and road fatalities.

I thank you.