

MEC VR Shongwe's Key Note Address on the opening of a Safety Summit held in Graceland Casino on the 02th August 2012

The MEC for Safety and Security of the Northern Cape Province, Honorable S. Mabilo

The Consulate of Swaziland to South Africa, Mr Sgayoyo Magongo,

The Executive Mayor of Gert Sibande District, Cllr MPP Nhlabathi

The Executive Mayor of Steve Tshwete Municipality, Cllr M Masina

The Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki, Cllr L. Masina,

The Deputy Director General from the Office of Premier Mr S. Mgidi

The Head of Department for Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr T. Sibuyi,

The Acting Head of Safety and Security in Limpopo Province, Ms NN Tsebe,

The Head of Provincial Secretariat in the Free State Province Advocate CJF Ontong,

The Senior Manager for Safety and Security in Gauten Province, M L Mothlabane

The Chief Director for Partnership in the Civilian Secretariat, Mr Zimu

The Senior Manager in the Partnership unit: Civilian Secretariat. Mr Mogatusi

Major General, Phahla from the Provincial SAPS,

Major General Dlamini From the Provincial SAPS as well

Members of Mayoral Committees, Speakers and Councilors,

The Chairperson of the Provincial CPF Board, Mr C. Pillay,

The Management of DCSSL

Members of the SAPS and Cluster Commanders

My Comrades from the ANC, Cosatu, SACP and SANCO

Leaders from other Political Parties and NGO's

Officials

Members of the Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I greet you all.

Program Director, let me start by thanking the Executive Mayor of Govan Mbeki Municipality, Councilor Masina for her support to the work that law enforcement officers are doing and may I take this opportunity and share my gratitude on the support she is giving to our programs.

The relationship we are having is indicative of the partnership that we need to fight crime and corruption in the Province. The partnership and working is extending to the councilors' and further more to the communities.

The Premier, Honorable DD Mabuza said, "Our partnership with communities cannot be emphasized. Isisho sithi "nawe uyiphoyisa". Wonke umuntu kufanele abe-yinxenye yokwenza umehluko ukuqeda ubugebengu esifundazweni sakhithi".

I am happy that we are on course in Govan Mbeki Municipality to ensure that what the Premier said, is done and practiced on daily bases.

I want to say to all the Executive Mayors, MMC's and Councilors' amongst us today that you are our gateway to the Communities of Mpumalanga. You are representing wards and Municipalities and therefore you are at the core, of the front we are building to confront criminals and law breakers in the Province and the Country.

Ladies and gentlemen, in my Policy and Budget Speech for 2012/2013, I announced that my Department will convene a Safety Summit and as per the commitment, we are meeting today to deliberate on all issues and aspects of safety of our people in the Province. This was after the call by the National Minister of Police, Mr Nathi Mthethwa that Provinces should Summits after national summit which was held last year in July 2011 on Police killing.

In the same speech I said, "It is our deliberate intention to fight crime and not to negotiate with criminals. We are readying our self to intensify the fight against crime working with law abiding citizens of Mpumalanga".

Ladies and Gentlemen, comrades and friends, colleagues' and distinguished guests, it is my humble plea that we use this Summit to identify bottle necks in the fight against crime and suggest concrete proposals that will make sure that our Communities that Are and feel Safe. This must not be talk shop.

We are here to build a front in the fight against crime. We are all foot soldiers and we must engage and find one another so that we can fully complement each other and gain the much needed strength to successfully declare Mpumalanga a no go area for criminals.

We are gathered at this Summit to commit that we will not ill not tolerate any form of criminal activity in this Province, which is a commitment that we share with the Premier of the Province, Honorable DD Mabuza.

We are therefore challenged to walk that extra mile in order to ensure safety and security of law abiding citizens of this Province.

I have also committed to this extra mile and took a decision to lead from the front to ensure that the people of Mpumalanga work with law enforcement officers when I took a deliberate decision that as an MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, I conduct our core function as a Department in the SAPS with them, on the field, all the time.

That is why I have been accused and reminded that I was not a Cop by some sections of our society and particularly the opposition parties.

Therefore it makes me happy that the statements and the signal that I was sending are beginning to bear fruition now. This Summit in meant to consolidate the commitment to building a broad front and making it everybody's business to ensure that we live in safer environment.

The message we must send is clear, it is that whether you are wearing a uniform or not, the bottom line is, if you want a crime free Mpumalanga, you must work with the law enforcement officers.

To demonstrate this to all, let me tell you that we have a Summit that is attended by the National and Provincial Governments, the District, and Local Municipalities as well as relevant official.

To ensure that we make impact we further invited the Business, the SAPS with their Cluster Commanders, Labour Movements, NPO's, CBO's, NPO's, CPF Board and its Clusters, School Governing Bodies, Student Organizations, Political Parties and may others.

We have done that purposefully and this summit must unlock the potential of the Province to donate criminals to our jails or force them to move to operate in other Provinces.

This is the working formulae that will free our people from the from the hands of criminals. My Colleagues from the Free State and Northern Cape must immediately after the Summit go and guard their Provinces because as we clean our Province, these criminals will go and look for safer havens elsewhere.

I am saying this because over the period I have been working with the SAPS family in our Province, it has been proven to me, beyond reasonable doubts that they have the capacity to give criminals a run for their money. All they need is support from other stakeholders which is why we have called all of you here to map a way forward.

The Community Policing Forums as elected by the communities has also proven to be a pillar in the fight against crime. The level of involvement of communities in the fight against crime has made it possible and easier for police to do their work and harder for criminals to operate.

We want to appeal to communities and all stakeholders, to work even more with the Police so that the commitment we are going to make, that of declaring Mpumalanga a no go area for criminals is seen, felt and tasted by criminals.

As we engage I would like to bring it to the attention of the Summit that we are already doing a lot to support the fight against crime and road carnage in the Province.

My views on crime riddled areas and killer roads in the Province are that there is a relationship. The SAPS has prioritized 25 Police Stations and the Traffic Management Unit has prioritized specific routes in the Province which are known to be the once contributing more to fatalities every year.

In the main, the towns lying on the N4, N17 and the N2 for instance are all in the top 25 highest contributors of crime in the Province.

These therefore tell us that there is a need to look closely on the behavior of the contributors of crime and ascertain if they are not on the same time contributing to road carnage.

I want us to pay a particular attention to the trends so that we can propose comprehensive and far reaching suggestion that will enable us to squeeze their breathing space as well as suffocate bad elements in our communities and on our roads.

We must help our people out there, who die in accidents that could have been avoided, had it not been because of speeding, drunk and driving and recklessness.

Program Director, we have Municipalities and politicians responsible for Public Safety. My Department is going out of its way to help them develop Municipal Safety Plans. These plans are key in ensuring that Municipalities have a comprehensive and coordinated approach to making their territories safer.

I would like to spend some time on Municipalities of the Province because crime and all that we are gathered here to prevent is happening directly within their boundaries'. There is no woman that gets raped in the Province, but it is always located in a particular Municipality and in a particular ward that is serviced by a particular Police Station.

This problem is perpetuated by the fact that, we have not done well in terms of the implementation of Municipal Safety Plans where such plans have been completed.

This, as I'm told, results from the lack of cooperation from municipalities. It is an open secret that municipalities are key role players in ensuring that community safety plans are in place and are implemented.

Where these plans have been developed, they must then be integrated into the IDP processes of municipalities so that they can be allocated resources required for implementation.

All municipalities want to draw investments but some seem to ignore the fact that business considers issues of safety when deciding where to take their money to.

A municipality that goes out to businesses and say, our municipality is an investment destination and on top of that we have a safety plan in place. In my view that municipality likely to stand better chance of attracting investments to its shores, creating employment and growing its revenues.

That is why I am appealing that municipalities must not leave safety issues to SAPS and do nothing. It was further reported to me that even our MEM or Community Safety Forums are not functioning properly. I am sure we are going to discuss all these issues in this Summit.

The mandate which was given to Municipalities on the 18th of May 2011 Local Government Elections was to strengthen local forums, to foster more community participation in combating crime and ensure that law-enforcement services are available where they are needed most.

The mandate further said that municipalities must mobilize communities against crime by promoting the formation of street committees and village committees as part of community efforts to combat crime, and through partnership with the private sector and community groups. In order for this to bear fruits, as a Department we committed and are assisting Municipalities to develop Municipal Safety Plans.

The Community Policing Forums as elected by various communities have also proven to be a pillar in the fight against crime. The level of involvement of communities in the fight against crime has made it possible and easier for police to do their work and harder for criminals to operate. We must have plans that will indicate how we assist these important components in the fight against crime.

In her book, "The Fundamentals of Security Vetting in a Democratic South Africa" Advocate Buyile Mdluli describes a Security Competent person as a person's ability to act in such a manner that he does not cause classified information or material to fall into unauthorized hands, thereby harming or endangering the security or interests of the State".

The book further says, "Security competence is normally measured against the following criteria: susceptibility to extortion or blackmail, amenability to bribes and susceptibility to being compromised due to compromising behavior, and loyalty to the state or institution".

How many of us here are Security Competent and also capable of standing firm in the fight against crime without being compromised.

I am raising this because if we will be overwhelmed and not consider the finer details, our broad front will account to zero.

We cannot build a broad front to fight crime and criminals with criminals.

We can't plan with them, they are not our friends, and they are our enemies.

We are fighting them, so they can't be Police Officials, or Traffic Officers or Mayors and MEC's.

They are our enemies, so this clearly indicates to us that we must fight them and force them to retreat. In order for us to do that we must be clean our self and not be vulnerable to blackmail.

They will never retreat if we beg them to do so, the only language they understand is force.

We must forcefully make them to stop harassing woman and children,

we must forcefully make them to stop killing innocent children,

we must forcefully stop them from drinking and driving,

we must forcefully make them realize that their rights are not above the law abiding citizens of the country.

We must build a culture where the law enforcement officers are friends of the people of the Province and are enemies of the criminals and law breakers. This is possible and as we meet here today, we must take our roles seriously and contribute to the effort to fight criminal elements within our communities.

I am sure that all of you are now well aware that the Premier of the Province Mr. DD Mabuza took a conscious decision to align the Traffic Management section in the Province to the Department of Safety Security and Liaison. This section was with Public Works, Roads and Transport.

Upon getting the new mandate to be responsible for road safety, we have decided to create and an elite unit of Traffic Cops that will be modeled on the famous TRT unit in the SAPS. We are did this to sharpen our edge to ensure that the people of the Province are and feel safe.

The unit was created to specialize and target the so called killer roads in the Province. We created it to deal once and for all with all the unnecessary road carnage that are caused by reckless driving, drunken driving and speeding.

The unit set me up against my comrades and friends in and at the same time received a warm welcome from the communities and victims of road carnage in the Province.

I said it before, and I am saying it again today, every life is precious. We must protect every single life out there. Here we are, at this Summit to find creative ways and means to save our people from an unnecessary pains and sorrows.

The Premier of the Province, Honourable DD Mabuza said in his State of the Province Address, "We committed ourselves to reduce crime and corruption to the extent where all South Africans can walk the streets any time of day free and fearless; sleep in their homes without all sorts of security measures; drive their cars anytime and anywhere without fear of being hi-jacked and grow their children without any fear of drug lords and rapists".

When the Premier made this commitment, he was committing all the peace loving people of the Province as well as the foot soldiers like me and you to practicalize his words. This Summit must guide us on how to intensify the struggle against corruption, crime and safety of our people.

When we stand on the pulpit to fight against crime, we must know that we may be pointing at some within our ranks, but that is when we must be more determined to deal it forcefully.

If we deal with those who are guilty of corruption within the SAPS, Traffic and Officials, we will definitely close the flood gates for those who are joining our ranks for corrupt purposes, and even better, for those who think our institutions are their milking cows.

My Department is doing almost everything to make the People of the Province feel safe and we have many programs to ensure such is achieved. This Summit must advise us if what we do is not enough and what more should be done.

We are hard at work to ensure safety of the people of the Province, and amongst the many projects and programs that we are doing to fight crime, we are doing the following:

SAPS has identified seven hotspots areas that need CCTV cameras. These cameras will be installed in phases, commencing from the financial year 2012/13 to 2014/15.

These areas include: Bushbuckridge, Hazyview, Pienaar, Kabokweni, Tonga, Vosman and Witbank

The cameras will be linked to the War Room situated in the Nelspruit Command Centre where the footage will be analyzed and they will not only be used to prevent crime, but also assist detectives to arrest criminals.

The long term goal is to have all Port of Entries in the province also linked to the War Room to monitor the movement of people and goods at our borders.

We are conducting campaigns on crime against women and children.

We are massively mobilizing tavern and shebeen owners to comply with the legislation regulating their businesses and educate them on the principle of responsible drinking. We also conduct workshops in partnership with the private sector regarding the above.

We are conducting Izimbizo's (public participation activities) and feedback sessions. All departments in the JCPS cluster participates during the sessions and activities.

We also supports the CPFs by supplying their patrol teams with materials such as torches, whistles and reflector jackets.

We have 538 Tourist Safety Monitors distributed in all tourist attractive areas.

We have been able to increase traffic policing visibility.

We are rolling out specific programmes to improve road safety awareness amongst our communities which are:

Scholar patrol

Driver education (DOTY & No.1 Taxi driver campaign)

Junior Training Centre (JTTC)

Road safety school debates

Participatory Education Techniques (PET)

Community Road Safety Councils (CRSC's)

Rest stops

Road shows

Road Safety Choral Music Competitions

We are doing all this to guarantee Safety of the people of Mpumalanga and the summit is correctly mandated to suggest news plans and strategies for consideration by the Department in order to improve and guarantee that the people of Mpumalanga are and feel safe.

Program Director, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have raided various Tarvens, Shebeens and beer halls all over the Province. We did this informed by the fact that a number of crimes committed are linked to alcohol abuse, crimes like Assault GBH, Rape etc.

We have found shocking objects in this Tarvens like Pangas, illegal fire Arms, Stolen Vehicles etc. We also found a lot of under age kids and taverns that are licensed to take 100 people packed by more than 500 people at a go.

Society cannot tolerate this kind of lawlessness. We cannot breed a drinking nation, where will future doctors, engineers and lawyers will come from?. We remain unshakable in our endeavor to rid of our streets of all criminals.

The fight against crime is part of an integrated approach in the efforts to accomplish the goal of a better life for all.

In my Policy and Budget Speech I said, "Fighting Crime is non-negotiable"

I went on to stress that; "it is our deliberate intention to fight crime and not to negotiate with criminals. We are readying our self to intensify the fight against crime working with law abiding citizens of Mpumalanga".

We want to create an environment where the law abiding citizens and well behaved individuals are protected by law enforcement officers. They must be friends and work with one another with ease. They must be treated like Kings and Queens so that all those that are on the wrong side of the laws are feeling the heat.

They must regret being on the wrong side of the law, they must suffer and change their ways so that vision 2030 is achieved without difficulties.

Ours is to fight crime. We will fight and when we fight there will be casualties' because some will have to lose in the process and I can tell you now that it will never be this broad front but the criminals. We are uniting and building a strong front to fight crime and criminality and we can never lose out.

We have the support of the population of the Province and its entire leadership from across all spectrums. We are have gathered today to go further to create a relationship between the Police, the Traffic Officials, Government Officials, Municipalities, and the people of Mpumalanga in general.

This relationship or a broad front will make Mpumalanga the Safest Province in South Africa.

Having done all this we still continue to see unnecessary death and criminal offences all over the Province. What else should be done? That is why we must declare a war against criminals and lawbreakers in our Province.

That is why we must declare our Province a no go zone for Criminals.

This Summit must be clear and make its intentions precise that we have no time to sweet talk and give bedroom eyes to criminals who are killing our brothers and sisters, thugs who drink and drive on our roads, cannibals who rape children and Gogos, irresponsible tarven and shebeen owners who violate their operating licenses.

Let this summit pledge to go out there and mobilize every member of the community to be a friend and further be part of this Broad Front in the fight against crime and criminality. Every member of the community must work to protect, support and ensure that criminals residing in our streets, drunken drivers, rapists and corrupt individuals are reported to the authorities.

In that way we will make it hard for criminal activities to find space to occur. Let build this unity and ensure that Law Enforcement Officials finds the best protection from the communities.

I have in the past months urged and galvanized the support against the killing of the Law Enforcement Officers in the Province. I have repeatedly alerted the people of the Province that when you kill a Police Officer or any other Law Enforcement Officer, you are actually killing the Community.

Sithi Wabulala Iphoyisa, Wabulala Umphakathi.

Who will protect the community from the blood thirsty criminals out there without the Police Officials?

Who will protect innocent, disciplined and responsible families on our roads from drunken, speeding and reckless drivers?

Who will protect our grannies and children as young as three months from being raped by ruthless rapists?

Ladies and Gentlemen who will protect us, if we let criminals dominates our streets and places where we should feel safe. We have nowhere to run. We must stand and fight back in order to secure a brighter future for our children.

I am saying we must fight back, not sweet talk criminals. We fight because when criminals hijack your car, they do not ask you, when they take your phone they do not plead with you to give it to them, when they rape innocent children and grannies, they do not take time to romance.

Sekwanele manje. Delegates to the Summit, assist us. Lets commit ourselves to the theme of the Summit that, I can, you can, We can.

Lets build a broad front against crime and declare our Province a no go area for criminals and their criminal activities.

I thank you.