

MEC VR SHONGWE SPEECH TO THE MUNIMEC HELD IN MBOMBELA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY ON THE 29TH JULY 2011

HOD for Safety, Security and Liaison,
Honorable Councilors and municipal managers,
Management of the SAPS,
Senior managers from the Criminal Justice Cluster,
members of the Provincial and Area CPF Boards,
representatives from Business Against Crime and
Officials from provincial government departments

Receive my warm greetings in the middle of winter.

Yesterday we had a meeting with Traffic Management Stakeholders where I had an opportunity to meet with our traffic management stakeholders in the province. On the agenda was the provincial road safety plan. Today I am equally meeting another very important role players in the fight against crime and criminality in our communities.

Let's all agree that we are in this together and the level at which we will go in terms of achievements, will be determined by the commitment we are putting into this. There is no secret here and I can tell all of you now, that there is no miracles that will reduce crime except hard work, commitment and dedication.

You must have been told by now that the Premier of the Province Mr. DD Mabuza has aligned the Traffic Management section in the Province to the Department of Safety Security and Liaison. This section use to be with Public Works, Roads and Transport. Upon getting the new mandate, 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 doing this to sharpen our edge.

This unit will specialize and work with me to target the so called killer roads in the Province. We want to deal once and for all with all this unnecessary road carnages that are caused by reckless driving, drunken driving and speeding. Once this unit is up and running I can tell you now my comrades and friends; if we find you messing up with the rules of the road, "Uzoluthoza olumanzi".

This unit will not be predictable, you find it on the N4, N12, N17, N3, N2 and as such this is a friendly warning to yourselves that those who do not behave on our roads then cause accidents are in for a tough time. I will forge ahead with this unit because road accidents are too much and we are tired of burying our loves once just because some drunkard is abusing the road or a drunken pedestrian is playing in the road. I sad it yesterday and I am saying it again today, every life is precious. We must protect every single life out there.

Another critical area is 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 sometimes results from 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 business and say, our municipality is an investment destination and on top of that we have a safety plan in place. In my view a municipality like that stands better chances 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 structures are not functioning properly. I am sure we are going to discuss all this issues today.

The issue of municipal bylaws should now be a permanent item on the agenda of municipalities until we have closed all the gabs that are there which in many occasion's makes the work of law enforces difficult. Every municipality must pass its own bylaws to protect the citizens from the handful of criminals who abuse the gabs and get away with it. Let's close ranks and improve our cooperation as the three tiers of Government to respond to the security needs of our people.

My colleagues, comrades and friends in the fight against crime, I am an MEC deployed in the Department of Safety Security and Liaison by the ANC. I want to remind you what we promised the people of South Africa before they could give us their vote in the last National and Provincial Elections.

The ANC election Manifesto committed us in clause 8 of the 12 Priorities that:

We will "Intensify the fight against crime and corruption".

We further said, we will do the following to in response to the call.

- Reduce the levels of overall contact, crimes against women and children and the trio(high jacking, business and house robberies)
- An effective and integrated criminal justice system, manage crime perceptions.
- Manage our borders.

Your mandate which you were given on the on the 18th of May 2011 Local Government Elections is 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 says 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, there must be a plan. I comes back to what I have raised earlier about 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 do we assists this important components in the fight against crime.

In closing Chairperson, let me remind you what the Premier of the Province, Mr DD Mabuza said in his state of the Province address.

He said" Comparing the crime statistics of 2009 and those of 2010, there is evidence of a gradual decline in almost all the different categories of crime tendencies including, contact-related crimes, property-related crimes, and other serious crimes. However, this is not enough. We need to see a serious decline. For as long as our people continue to be terrorized by criminals, we cannot and shall not rest until such time peace and stability prevail in all our townships, villages, farm areas, cross - border areas and our suburbs".

We find strength, inspiration and motivation to keep going on from the words of the Premier. By working together, building a broad front that is united in purpose to eradicate crime we will finally win the battle. Let's do it, because that is the reason why we are here today. If there are some amongst us who are not with us, they are welcome to leave because the purpose of meeting here is to eradicate crime not to increase it.

When we make that commitment today that we will go all out of our way to make our people safer, we will be doing it for Madiba.

I thank you.