

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER, MR CHUPU MATHABATHA ON THE OCCASION OF THE PROVINCIAL DIALOGUE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY.

06 February 2020

Programme Director;
MEC for Transport and Community Safety, Ntate Dickson Masemola;
Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr John Mpe;
Executive Mayor of Polokwane Local Municipality, Cllr Thembi Nkadimeng;
Provincial Commissioner, General Ledwaba and your team,
Leadership of the South African Council of Churches, Rev L Mohlala;
Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Khoshi Malesela Dikgale;
SALGA Provincial Chairperson, Cllr Pule Shai;
Provincial Secretary of COSATU, Ntate Gerald Twala;
Representatives of all Community structures present here,
Esteemed ladies and gentlemen;

Thank you for honouring our invitation to this important community safety dialogue. The Program Director has already and adequately explained the purpose of today's dialogue.

What I can say is that we have arranged this dialogue as government in partnership with various civil society organisations.

The role of the South African Council of Churches in conceptualising and putting together this dialogue has been very great. We appreciate the role of the church in this regard and all the social partners who are with us here today.

As I have said, this important dialogue is a product of fruitful engagement between our religious leadership, civil society and our Provincial Government.

These engagements were in response of the saddening incidences of abuse and violence in our communities.

The most alarming of these incidences is what appeared to be targeted killings in the province.

We have seen the killings of SAMWU leaders in the Vhembe region – we have witnessed the killing of ANC Councillors in the Waterberg region and we have seen the killing of an ANC Councillor in Sekhukhune.

This is not something we want to see in our Province or anywhere in the country.

Our view remains that no difference, either political or otherwise can be resolved through violence, particularly the spilling of blood.

No one has the right to take life because life is a gift from God Himself. As if this is not horrific enough, we are also witnessing a wave of violence and abuse targeted at women and children of our country.

In this Province, we have seen fathers killing their own children; We have seen mothers killing the very children they have brought to this world.

We have seen husbands killing wives and wives killing husbands. Just recently we were dealing with the brutal and senseless rape and killing of Ms Precious Ramabulana who was a student at Capricorn TVET College.

She was raped and killed in her own room, while she was asleep. Just very recently, we had to deal with another senseless killing, the brutal killing of Shongi Nkwashu who was an Intern Doctor at Mankweng Hospital.

She too was killed in her own room. Even more painful is the fact that she was allegedly killed by someone she knew and someone who claimed to love her.

We have recently buried many women in Vhembe, Mopani and Capricorn, killed almost in the same pattern.

One person on Social media wrote that it seems Limpopo province has graduated into attending funerals every weekend. The person had noted MECs Nkakareng Rakgoale, Dr Phophi Ramathuba, and MEC Dickson Masemola who for weeks have been attending funerals every weekend in the past few months.

Even animals do not do this to each other;

This dialogue is about giving birth to new strategies and tactics in our fight against crime and targeted killings in our communities.

The National Development Plan visualises a South Africa where people are living safely without the fear of crime.

The Plan says that women, children and all vulnerable groups should feel protected. They should have confidence in the criminal justice system to effectively apprehend and prosecute criminals who violate individual and community safety.

As we all know, crime undermines many of the constitutional rights of our people, including the right to life, the right to freedom of movement, the right to property and the right to privacy.

Crime frustrates society's ability to operate freely and efficiently, let alone the state's ability to deliver on its developmental mandate.

The fight against crimes therefore requires far more than just a political will, this is a societal struggle. This dialogue must therefore assist us to craft strategies to ensure that we fight crime from all fronts.

This dialogue is also tasked to come with innovative ways to ensure that we deter criminals, prevent criminal actions and educate the public on crime prevention strategies.

Above everything, this summit must reaffirm the centrality of our communities in the fight against crime.

We must move from the premise that our communities have a central role to play in the fight against crime.

Our people must participate in already established Street Committee Forums, Safer School Campaigns and Community Policing Forums. The expectations from our people is that this dialogue will come up with ways to ensure peaceful nights for households, ensure security of private property, but most importantly, ensure that our people's right to freedom of movement is not undermined by rampant criminals who are roaming our streets.

At the end of today, we should be able to say to the people of Seshego, Namakgale, Thohoyandou, Tzaneen and elsewhere, that before we take drastic steps against perceived criminals, here is the church, the traditional leader, the CPF, and the police. Let's engage and come out with a legalised structure.

United in action we can win the war against crime and criminal gangs.

We must indeed harness all efforts to end killings and crime in the Province.

The people of this Province deserve peace, security and tranquillity.

Programme Director;

I am not going to take long on this podium. The business of the day is in the presentations which we are scheduled to receive after the break. Although these presentations will be coming from different perspectives, they are all geared towards the direction of a safer Limpopo.

Once again, let us harness all efforts to end killings and crime in the Province.

I thank you.