

Media Statement  
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Limpopo puts tighter measures in place for a safer and death free Initiation School Season.

The Limpopo Provincial Government is on a constant quest to improve operations in Initiation Schools for a safe return of graduates.

With the 2024 Initiation School Season commencing from 14 June 2024 to 13 July 2024, the Limpopo department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) has put in tighter measures through the establishment of a Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) in terms of the Customary Initiation Act 02 of 2021.

The act affords PICC members the powers to oversee the conduct of Senior Traditional Leaders, Principals, Surgeons, Care-givers and cooperation of parents to ensure that there are no deaths and illegal schools operating within the province. This year, the PICC received 703 applications (389 males and 314 females) from various districts. Out 703 applications received, 631 (359 males and 272 females) were approved.

In collaboration with the Provincial Department of Health, Senior Traditional Leaders, principals of initiation schools, traditional surgeons and care-givers will be trained to perform their roles and functions with regard to initiation in general.

Speaking at the Pre-Initiation Workshop attended by the Chairperson of the Limpopo House of Traditional and Khoi-san Leaders, Hosi Pheni Ngove, Department of Health, South African Police Service (SAPS), National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), Senior Traditional Leaders, Traditional Surgeons, Principals of initiation schools and Care-givers on 04 June 2024, CoGHSTA MEC, Basikopo Makamu expressed that Initiation schools hold a revered place in cultural heritage and serve as an essential rite of passage for youth.

“As we approach the 2024 winter initiation season, I am proud to share that the Limpopo Provincial Government is fully prepared and our readiness is a result of the concerted efforts of various stakeholders, diligently coordinated to safeguard the health, safety and cultural integrity of the initiation process,” he said.

Although readiness for the 2024 Initiation Season by all role players is guaranteed, Chairperson of the PICC, Hosi Shitlhamgoma Chauke pleads with parents/guardians not to enrol children under the age of 12 years in initiation schools as this may result in fatalities as seen in previous years.

Furthermore, he highlights that it is crucial that parents /guardians enrol their children in the 631 approved and registered initiation schools that have been published for accountability reasons.

In addition, in partnership with the Department of Health, only registered medical doctors and registered traditional surgeons with experience will be allowed to perform initiation rituals on initiates to avoid injury/botched circumcision.

SAPS will be on standby to attend to any illegal activities and reports of assault, abduction, operation of illegal schools and over crowding.

Daily monitoring of initiation schools by PICC members and Traditional Affairs officials will be done from 14 June 2024 to 13 July 2024 to maintain a safer and successful Initiation School Season in Limpopo .

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