

SPEECH BY PREMIER DR PHOPHI RAMATHUBA AT THE SAPS PROVINCIAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS, THE RANCH RESORT, 10 OCTOBER 2025

Programme Directors Warrant Officer TG Shai and Mr K Motau,
National Police Commissioner General Fannie Masemola,
MEC for Transport and Community Safety Ms Violet Mathye,
MEC for Sport, Arts and Culture Mr Jerry Maseko,
Provincial Commissioner Lt General Thembi Radebe,
Executive Mayor of Capricorn District Municipality, Cllr Mamedupi Teffo,
The Mayor of Mogalakwena Local Municipality, Cllr Ngoako Thulani Taueatsoala,
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Transport and Community Safety, Ms K Lebea,
Members of the South African Police Services,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Avuxeni, Thobela, Aa, Lotshani, Good evening, Goeie naand!

It is indeed a profound honour to stand before you once again at the SAPS Provincial Excellence Awards. This gathering represents not just a celebration of excellence, but a moment for reflection on the progress we've made and the challenges that remain.

As we come together tonight, we are acutely aware of the public focus on our police service during these trying times. The headlines are filled with stories that remind us of the urgency to reform and refine our approach to law enforcement. South Africa yearns for a police service that is agile, effective, accountable and above reproach. Tonight, these awards are not just accolades; they are a clarion call - a reminder that the heavy responsibility of ensuring safety and security in our communities rests upon your shoulders.

I am reminded of the powerful words of Ben Okri, a celebrated son of Africa, who in his moving poem "African Elegy" captures the spirit and resilience of our continent. He writes:

"We are the miracles that God made
To taste the bitter fruit of Time.
We are precious.
And one day our suffering
Will turn into the wonders of the earth."

These words resonate deeply with the journey of the South African Police Services. Your work is filled with both challenges and triumphs; it embodies the spirit of endurance and the relentless pursuit of justice. Each day you face the bitter fruits of our society - crime, violence and despair. Yet, within this struggle, you exhibit a remarkable ability to find joy, hope and dignity in your service.

The themes of suffering and resilience in Okri's poetry reflect the landscape you navigate as officers. It is essential to recognise that your toils and sacrifices are not in vain; they carry profound meaning and purpose. Your commitment to protecting our citizens is a noble calling and while the rewards may sometimes seem elusive, they enrich our communities and fortify our society.

As the provincial government, we cherish the partnership we have forged with SAPS in Limpopo. Together, we have launched campaigns to combat crime and ensure the safety of our communities. Our recent initiatives, especially in Thohoyandou, addressing the critical issues of gender-based violence and femicide, show our collective determination to create a safe environment for all. We cannot stand idle while these societal ills persist; our moral commitment to uplift women and children is paramount.

Let us take a moment to commend the extraordinary dedication exhibited by our officers. The successful conviction of a perpetrator in the heart-wrenching case of a 101-year-old victim is a testament to your unwavering commitment. I commend Constable for her diligence; you exemplify what it means to uphold the values of justice and integrity in your work.

Tonight, as we recognise those among you who will receive awards, I want to convey my heartfelt congratulations. Each of you has earned your place here through hard work, collaboration and an unyielding commitment to keeping Limpopo safe. While I refer to you as winners, I also acknowledge the collective effort that has brought us to this moment. Your dedication, resilience and teamwork keep our province at the forefront of effective policing.

Let these awards be a beacon of motivation as we strive for excellence, accountability and compassion within SAPS. Together, let us continue to rebuild the trust of the communities we serve and foster a culture of safety, dignity and respect.

Thank you all for your tireless efforts in making Limpopo a safer place. Together, we can turn our collective suffering into the wonders of a brighter future.

Let us rise to the challenge!

Thank you.