



community safety &
liaison

Department :
Community Safety and Liaison
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Private Bag X9143, Pietermaritzburg, 3200
179 Jabu Ndlovu, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: (033) 341 9300 (Switchboard) Fax: (033) 342 6345

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO : ALL MEDIA
DATE : TUESDAY, 08 MARCH 2016
ATTENTION : NEWS EDITORS/REPORTERS AND PR WIRE

MEC MCHUNU CAUTIONS AGAINST THE ESCALATION OF ILLEGAL PUBLIC PROTESTS AND VIOLENCE AS 130 PEOPLE ARE ARRESTED IN THE PROVINCE

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Willies Mchunu, has issued a stern warning against those mobilizing illegal protests, saying that police will act decisively and will leave no stone unturned to protect order, property and limb.

Mchunu's stern warning comes in the wake of the arrest of well over 130 people, in less than three days in the province.

Those arrested have been charged for public violence, malicious damage to property and arson.

More than 120 suspects were arrested in Mandeni following the burning of factories, burning of a truck and two vehicles and four containers. Police have also indicated that they were working flat out to round up more suspects.

Over the weekend, at least six (6) people were arrested in KwaMathenjwa in Jozini following the malicious damage to property and incidents of intimidation.

Following some incidents of public disturbance, in KwaMathenjwa, MEC Mchunu and MEC for Economic Development, Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Mr Mike Mabuyakhulu, intervened successfully over the weekend to stop the escalation of the conflict in the area.

After an intensive engagement with this community, spearheaded by MEC's Mchunu and Mabuyakhlu, both factions in conflict agreed to suspend the protests and pledge their willingness to work and cooperate with the law and all enforcement agencies.

MEC Mchunu is calling on the people of KwaZulu-Natal to refrain from illegal activities during public protests, saying any act of violence would not at all be tolerated and would result in more people being arrested.

“These violent illegal protests are unacceptable and destabilizing the economy of the province. In some cases protestors burn tyres and barricade the roads, which affects the movement of goods and services and the movement of people.

“The escalation of incidents of vandalism and malicious damage to property is a cause for serious concern. Police have been placed on high alert to intervene in those areas and effects arrest to maintain law and order,” said Mchunu.

He warned that the arrest of well over 130 people, in less than three days, was not a good reflection on the province.

“We, therefore, urge people to utilize legal and peaceful processes to resolve their differences, instead of violence and threats. Experience has shown that engagement between the community and those in authority produce better and sustainable solutions to challenges faced by people” said MEC Mchunu.

Mchunu added that the Department of Cogta's Rapid Response team, Community Safety and Liaison district team and Crime Prevention Volunteers were keeping their eyes firm on the ground to proactively intervene in areas where there were looming public protests.

MEC Mchunu further urged political parties to engage their members on using proper processes of raising their grievances on party internal matters, instead of mobilizing mass communities to cause havoc.

ENDS

Media Contact:

Sipho Khumalo @082-682-6437

Sipho.khumalo@comsafety.gov.za

OR

Kwanele Ncalane

: 072 803 1462/079 6995755

: Kwanele.ncalane@kzntransport.gov.za