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MEDIA STATEMENT

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MEC KAUNDA OPTIMISTIC ABOUT KZN TURNING THE TIDE AGAINST CRIME

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mxolisi Kaunda is optimistic that the province is turning the tide against crime following the successes the police have made in various operations in the last two months.

Last week, police arrested 12 suspects in connection with a stolen vehicle that was found in one of the Clairwood panel beaters being stripped off.

In the beginning of July, police conducted various law enforcement operations in the province which resulted in the recovery of 146 illegal firearms and 1219 rounds of ammunition. During this operation 140 suspects were arrested for being in possession of illegal firearms and ammunition. These illegal firearms include, 129 pistols, five shotguns and nine rifles.

In the same period, police conducted law enforcement operations aimed at reducing cross-border crime. Operations in Manguzi resulted in the recovery of 20 stolen and hijacked vehicles ready to be taken across the borders. Eight suspects were arrested during the operation. Last week, police conducted a multidisciplinary road block along the South African and Lesotho border. The operation, which focused on stock theft, saw a number of stock pounds, kraals, butcheries and abattoirs being visited. Police recovered 117 stolen cattle, 107 goats and Seven horses during the operation.

In an effort to fight the scourge of drug trafficking and substance abuse, police arrested 10 suspects in Phoenix and Madadeni in Newcastle for possession of drugs last week.

Kaunda has commended the police for their sterling work in ridding the province of crime. **“This is a clear indication that if police work closely with the community, we can be able to defeat the scourge of crime. As the provincial government, we call upon members of the community to continue to share information with the police because fighting crime is a collective responsibility,”** said Kaunda.

Kaunda said that he will be interacting with the provincial commissioner on a regular basis to ensure that these operations are intensified and sustained. **“Fighting crime is one of the seven bold priorities of this government and we will strain every nerve to ensure that the people of KwaZulu-Natal are and feel safe. We will also improve relations between the police and the community through their crime fighting structures,”** said Kaunda.

He also warned criminals who attack the police when executing their duties that in such instances, police will defend themselves and the authority of the state. **“If our men and women in uniform are attacked by heartless and heavily armed criminals, the law allows them to defend themselves and innocent citizens,”** said Kaunda.

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