

TO ALL NEWS EDITORS

Media Release

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ACTING TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MEC KWAZI MSHENGU COMMENDS SWIFT ACTION BY POLICE WHICH LED TO THE ARREST OF FIVE NOTORIOUS ARMED ROBBERS

Acting KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr Kwazi Mshengu has praised police for their swift action in arresting five heavily armed robbers following a fierce exchange of gunfire between the robbers and police in Empangeni.

Yesterday, police officers from the Empangeni Task Team received information of suspects involved in a house robbery at Esikhaleni. The police officers spotted the vehicle used by the suspects at Nseleni in Empangeni and began to tail the vehicle. The suspects spotted the police officers and opened fire on them.

One of the police officers was shot on his leg and is recovering in hospital. Two suspects were arrested at the scene but their partners in crime escaped during the shootout. The vehicle that was used by the suspects, which was stolen from Esikhaleni during the house robbery, was recovered at the scene.

Last night, a follow-up operation was conducted at Ndaya in Esikhaleni to arrest the outstanding suspects. The suspects once again opened fire at police officers as police approached their hideout and a shootout ensued. Three suspects were arrested while an accomplice fled during the gun battle. Police recovered a pistol, a network jammer and four big screen television sets at the scene.

MEC Mshengu has commended the efforts by the police and welcomed the arrests of the five armed robbers.

“We will continue to encourage our police officers to act decisively when facing dangerous and heavily armed criminals and not to surrender and die with guns in their holsters. The five suspects face charges of armed robbery, attempted murder of a police officer, possession of stolen property, unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition, unlawful possession of a network jammer as well as charges in

terms of the Immigration Act. This serves as a strong warning to criminals that police are serious about fighting fire with fire when faced with life threatening situations. We wish the injured police officer who was shot during the shootout a speedy recovery," said MEC Mshengu.

The five suspects will remain in custody pending their appearance at the Empangeni Magistrates Court.

ENDS

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