

MEDIA STATEMENT

21 February 2010

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT CRIME FIGHTING PROGRAMME “BUILDING A UNITED FRONT AGAINST CRIME” TAKES AIM AT DURBAN CRIMINALS

THE KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government is to launch an offensive against Durban criminals dubbed, *Operation Hlasela* (translated to mean declare an open war) in a bid to clean up the city ahead of the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup, MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison Willie Mchunu has announced.

Mchunu was speaking at the 3rd MEC's Community Awards for Police Excellence held in Durban on Friday. He said that there has been a change of heart with regard to the implementation of the government crime offensive. "We had decided at the crime symposium where the Provincial Crime Fighting strategy dubbed Building a United Front Against Crime was adopted – to start the crime offensive in the outlying areas of the province. We have now changed tact. We want Durban to be a liberated zone as a host city for the 2010 Soccer World Cup". "Our approach will be focused and targeted".

Addressing the media after the announcement, Mchunu refused to be drawn on the details. "All details will be announced at the State of the Province Address. What I can safely say is that life is going to be very tough for criminals. All key elements of the plan have been finalized. We have enough resources, and an abundance of political will. We will win this war in as short a time as possible. As criminals feel the heat in Durban, we will be waiting for them in Pietermaritzburg. As they go into hiding in the rural areas, they will find us there. There is no room for error. No room for complacency. Criminals must surrender or face the fire.

ON POLICE UNDER FIRE

During his key note address at the awards, Mchunu cajoled police officers never to pray when a criminal draws a gun on them. “Don’t pray when a criminal draws a gun on you, your prayer may be answered too late – defend yourself and pray later”. He insisted that the South African Police force is our first and last line of defence.

ON WINNERS 'N LOSERS OF THE MEC'S COMMUNITY AWARDS FOR POLICE EXCELLENCE

He said: “These awards are about a historical alliance of good men and women against evil. They are, a recognition that policing is by nature a partnership amongst those who subscribe to the notion of safer communities. It is a universal language of service to one’s country – to deepen democracy, and to protect its citizens, especially the most valuable amongst us, all victims of crime in particular women and children.

However, it should be noted that in all awards systems, not all the winners actually receive awards. As far as we are concerned all good police officers are indeed winners. I therefore wish to caution all those whose names will not be announced as winners today not to despair. We remain mindful that in essence, excellence is a microcosm of team work. The outcome of the MEC’s Community Awards for Police Excellence is to entrench and promote the concept of community policing. To honour a few actually is, but, a token of appreciation for the SAPS organisational achievements. It is not necessary to create a perception that some officers/or stations are better than the rest. As a Chinese proverb goes - Behind every able man, there are always other able men.” I don’t know what the proverb says about women, quipped Mchunu”. (See the attachment with all the winners).

ON CORRUPT POLICE OFFICERS

“He said the fight against crime and criminals requires police officers, politicians, and community activists with no blemishes – “to win against crime, its fighters must be clean & upright”. He said it was inconceivable that a police officer should “flirt” with criminals. “Such officers must be exposed, isolated, and thrown into jail without delay. I am very pleased with the response of good officers who just last week arrested their own for involvement in criminal activities”.

Speaking at the same event, the SAPS Provincial Police Commissioner Mamunye Ngobeni hailed MEC Mchunu for honoring good police officers. “We will remove bad apples within the force without any hesitation,” Ngobeni said.

**ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY’S MEDIA LIAISON & PUBLIC RELATIONS
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