

# **INPUT BY LIMPOPO MEC FOR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY, MAVHUNGU LERULE-RAMAKHANYA ON THE CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY.**

**Chair of the NCOP**

**Deputy chair**

**Members of the house**

**Salga representative**

**Deputy Minister**

Crime is a threat to economic growth and more often, it creates instability and instills fear amongst community members. Business cannot thrive in a place where crime is prevalent and very little is done to combat the ills. The disruptions caused by crime have serious social and economic impact hence the need for a bold move to drastically reduce crime by the year 2030.

## **Chairperson**

Limpopo is a unique province with its own challenges and our Crime Prevention Strategy is designed to deal with key pressing issues that have been identified as a threat to peace and stability in the province. The province is vastly rural with 80 percent being rural communities. The rural communities are divided into two segments, the people living under traditional leaders and the farming communities. The last census report revealed that the province accounts to just over 5 million people. There are currently 99 police stations and about 43 satellite stations to service the entire community. Our police are over-stretched, and it is always strenuous to attend to all the public needs.

The uniqueness of the province I alluded to earlier on has prompted us to focus on six key themes as a way of tackling crime. The strategy is focusing on;

- **Rural Safety**
- **Social Fabric crime**
- **Trans-border and organized crime**
- **Community Policing**
- **Situational crime prevention**
- **Improving the Criminal Justice System.**

For us as the Province to achieve what I have just mentioned, a multi-faceted approach will be very key in addressing the identified pillars aimed at reducing the high crime statistics. We are dealing with the issues at the JCPS cluster level to ensure that all key stakeholders are on board and they individually play their role. I may not dwell on all of them because of time constraints but let me cite **Rural Safety, Community Policing, Trans-border, and organized crime** as the most fundamental and urgent.

### **Rural Safety and Community Policing**

Majority of our people are based in rural areas and that is where most contact crimes such as rape, assault GBH and murder are recorded. The strategy is outlining possible measures that can be taken to address the ills. Most of the crimes reported in rural areas are first heard and attended by traditional leaders, pastors, and social workers. The rural safety pillar is empowering local leadership to manage most of the issues brought to their attention and to escalate where SAPS is needed.

Traditional leaders and traditional healers are a very useful place to start, as many of the crime and disorder problems that occur in their communities are brought to their attention, without necessarily being reported to the police or other authorities. By creating protocols to share information and work together with these interest groups, the province will be able to both get a clearer picture of the less mainstream crime and disorder problems that are occurring in the province and assist the traditional leaders and healers to give practical and useful advice to their communities when the need arises. There is a need to involve farmers and farm workers in forums that both allow for the identification of crimes affecting them, and the opportunity to interrogate and understand the causes of these problems to bring about long-term solutions

I must also indicate that the concept of sector policing is assisting in this regard. Sector policing is the division of the area into smaller manageable sectors which involves the assignment of police to a particular sector which encourages regular patrol and increased contact with members of the local communities. The sector police work very closely with community Safety structures such as CPF, CSF, Neighbourhood watches, Farm Watches and Street committees.

We are encouraged by the commitment of our volunteers, “the community in Blue” who are the first contact point and ground forces in the fight against crime. We currently have 728 CPF volunteers in Limpopo and the number excludes the sub-forums in different villages and farms and townships. The number is coupled with 35 district

forums and an additional 1 350 street patrollers. Most of the success that SAPS is reporting in the Province is as a result of the commitment of our volunteers who are equally concerned about the high rate of crime in their respective areas.

### **Chairperson**

We have a Rural Safety Action Plan in place to serve as a guideline to guarantee that there is reduction of crime. The plan seeks to;

- Ensure the safety of the farming community in the province.
- To ensure that the employment of immigrants by farmers is controlled and regulated.
- Improved access to criminal justice for rural communities and farm workers.
- Improved investigation and management of stock theft.
- Curb the theft of metals and electricity cables.
- Regulation of liquor selling and trading hours.
- Public campaigns to discourage mob justice

Some of the issues I just highlighted will of course need the intervention of other sectors but majority are in the security cluster and will work together to achieve our common objectives.

### **Trans-border and organized crime**

#### **Chairperson**

I have indicated earlier that Limpopo is unique and a gateway to SADC. We have two main ports of entry, The Beitbridge Border and Groblersburg Border posts linking us with Zimbabwe in the North and Botswana in the West. The challenges at the vicinity of our borders are well documented and we are always combat ready to deal with cross-border crimes. We are employing a multi-faceted approach with all the JCPS cluster departments on board to deal with crimes such as

illegal crossings, transportation of illicit goods, explosives, armed robbery, and theft to name a few. Our continuous successes in combating crime around the borders is impressive and the request for additional resources to deal with the identified weaknesses will come very handy.

## **Chairperson**

It is because of our crime preventing strategy that we were able to reduce the smuggling of counterfeit goods and illicit cigarettes. Most of the suspects are arrested on our major roads during our routine multi-disciplinary operation. We will continue with our joint operations to ensure that we eradicate crime at the vicinity of the borders and on all our roads in the province.

This is just a summary of the provincial crime prevention strategy and we are working very closely with local government structures. With all the necessary support from all stakeholders involved, I have no doubt that we will manage to have a crime free province.

I thank you!!