

2019/11/28

Pretoria; 28 November 2019

Programme Director & Chairperson on the National Press Club Ntando Makhubu
Members of the National Press Club Present
Members of the Media
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you very much to the National Press Club for the opportunity to address this event. I would like to address this platform on various issues that are before the South African Police Service. The scourge of Gender Based Violence and Femicide and give an update on our plans of action as the SAPS as directed by the President .I will also touch on the SAPS efforts to curb violent and fear crimes and of course I want to shed more light on the much anticipated Firearms Amnesty Period.

SAFER FESTIVE SEASON

As the country looks forward to unwinding and taking a much deserved break during the Festive Season. I want to assure all those who live within our borders that many of the men and women in Blue will not be taking a break.

Instead, the SAPS will continue to execute their Constitutional mandate - to prevent, combat and investigate crime while ensuring your safety and security.

The South African Police Service's top management met up in a Ministerial Retreat some weeks back to strategize on how to improve the safety and security of citizens in this country.

Firstly we agreed that it was time to change things around. Hence we adopted the term "Zizojikia Izinto". As the police service, turning the tide against criminality means for us, we MUST do things differently. This is why we are addressing the availability of resources and the alignment of resources with urgency. We know that murders occur mostly on weekends and in many instances people are killed nearby drinking holes, now equipped with these facts, we will deploy more officers at identified areas at identified times in an effort to bring down incidents of contact and violent crimes. We will utilize resources optimally and shift them to places they are needed most.

TACKLING TRIO AND FEAR CRIMES

We are seeing that criminals are increasingly staging brazen robberies in malls and on the roads by attacking money vans. The latest crime statistics show that CIT robberies have decreased by over 23%; bank robberies and car high-jacking have also shot down. This decrease hasn't been by luck; it has been due many resources being pumped in to curb these Cash- In Transit robberies.

INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS TAKING DOWN GANGS

Intelligence driven operations are bearing fruit and infiltrating and taking down criminal gangs and syndicates. Going into the Festive season, the message is clear! Criminals. RUN! The SAPS is taking a zero nonsense approach and committing itself to squeezing out all forms of criminality.

INCREASED POLICE VISIBILITY

Blue lights will be the order of the day! Officers will be on trains, in busses and bus stops, malls. There will be blue lights on roads and highways. You will see boots on the ground in taxi ranks, Chisa Nyamas, recreational parks, beaches to ensure that this festive season is festive and remains that way. Indeed Zizojika Izinto and we WILL turn the tide against crime this festive season and going forward.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

As the country observes 16 days of Activism against Gender based Violence. As a nation we ought to hang our heads in shame as once again a young girl's life is taken away in the most gruesome manner.

I want to firstly condemn in the strongest terms the gruesome killing of Precious Ramabulana in Limpopo. While a manhunt is underway and police in that province are following on a few leads to find the perpetrator of this heinous crime, I am calling on anyone with information to come forward. Unfortunately, Precious is one TOO MANY victims of the despicable violence meted on women's bodies. As part of the Emergency Response Action Plan on GBV and Femicide, we as the SAPS members are going full speed with our efforts to train over 4 thousand 500 SAPS members in VICTIM-CENTRIC and SURVIVOR FOCUSED SERVICES

Ladies and Gentlemen, we want to better our service delivery to our people. We are working at ensuring that ALL victims of crime especially those affected by Gender Based Violence are treated with the level of professionalism and dignity they deserve at station levels.

Now that all police stations are equipped with Rape Kits, we are working towards ensuring the same stations have Victim Friendly Facilities staffed with officials who can assist victims of sexual crimes, professionally and take down their statements in a discreet manner. The SAPS Detective Services is on a recruitment drive to attract trainees at SAPS Academies to fill over 300 posts. These posts are needed at our (FCS) Family Violence Child and Sexual Offences units. The trainees will undergo psychometric assessments before being considered for the jobs. To date, over 3091 SAPS members have been trained in proactive courses and will now be equipped with qualifications ranging from Victim Empowerment Training, Children and Youth at Risk and courses to deal with vulnerable children. A further 1 thousand 1818 members in the last seven months have been trained in Domestic Violence Learning programs. To ensure that perpetrators of these heinous crimes don't get away. A National Task team will analyze withdrawn and undetected cases for the past two years. The SAPS Detective Services are also currently addressing long-standing cases related to GBV and Femicide.

FIREARMS AMNESTY

Chairperson, **Guns are the enemy of our society**. The 2018/2019 crime statistics released in September have once again confirmed what we know. Firearms are the instruments commonly used in the commission of crime, especially violent crimes. They are the biggest drivers of crime and murder on South African streets. A notice in the Government Gazette has been placed and published on the 25th of November 2019 to declare a Firearms Amnesty for a period of six months starting from the 1st of December 2019 to the 31st of May 2020.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe this period of amnesty WILL and MUST result in the reduction of the number of illegally possessed firearms in South Africa and it is in the public interest to do so. In the Western Cape, while the deployment of the SANDF to parts of the Cape Flats to tackle gang related violence, remains a temporary measure. The joint operations with the soldiers and SAPS have resulted in the confiscation of 36 firearms in the past week alone. Since the start of the National Festive Season Launch in October, almost 2 THOUSAND firearms have been removed from the wrong hands in all the 9 provinces. Over a thousand of those firearms were siezed in the Gauteng province. Just last month the SAPS destroyed and melted over 20 thousand illegal firearms confiscated during policing operations in the previous year.

CALLING ON MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION

It is on this score, that we as the South African Police are calling on South Africans to heed the call to take part in the upcoming Firearms Amnesty. The declaration of this Amnesty period is in the interest of the public and it is also the Government's endeavour to deal decisively with excess illegal firearms and unwanted firearms that end up in the hands of criminals, therefore increasing the proliferation of firearms. Ladies and Gentlemen, Section 139(1) of Firearms Control Act, 2000 (Act No 60 of 2000), provides that I as the Minister of Police may by notice in the Gazette declare an amnesty if amnesty may result in the reduction of the number of illegally possessed firearms in South Africa and it is in the public interest to do so. I believe this period of amnesty will do just that.

Members of the media, in terms of section 138 of the Firearms Control Act, 'amnesty' means an indemnity against prosecution for the unlawful possession of a firearm and ammunition. This Amnesty creates an opportunity for members of the public to surrender illegally possessed or unwanted firearms, ammunition and/or firearm parts to the South African Police Service without fear of being prosecuted for the unlawful possession. But it is important to note that during this Amnesty period, there will be NO indemnity for firearms handed over which have been used to commit crime. Ladies and Gentlemen, I am urging all members of society to come forward and "Letha Isimbhamu"

Those who surrender their firearms during the period of Amnesty will be required to present themselves to a nearest police station. You will need to complete and sign the necessary forms which include an Amnesty form. Gun owners who for whatever reason failed to renew their licences should also take advantage of this amnesty period. Those with lapsed licences must hand in their weapons and in terms of the Firearm Control Act, 2000 – they should surrender their firearm to apply for a licence. The person who applies for a firearm licence is required to physically hand in the firearm to the Designated Amnesty Official and lodge an application within 14 days. Only the person who physically surrenders the firearm to the Designated Amnesty Official, may apply for a licence.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I know that questions will be raised about what the safe keeping of these firearms.

To alleviate these concerns, as the SAPS we will ensure maximum security.

- There are nine centralised storage facilities in all provinces and have been subjected to risk assessment.
- Designated Amnesty Officials and SAPS Officials have been subjected to thorough screening and vetting and only those that met the identified criteria have been appointed to handle amnesty firearms handed in.

A Detective investigative team has been established to investigate cases of firearms linked to crimes. When the amnesty period ends, firearms will be audited for the purpose of destruction.

The process for destruction of firearms will then be followed to destroy amnesty firearms, firearm parts and ammunition. An enquiry desk at Central Firearm Register Call centre has been established to handle all enquiries related to the amnesty. The telephone number is 012 353 6111.

Programme Director, let me not leave this platform without talking about another matter close to many South Africans hearts. The South African Police Service understands the pain that the Family and friends of Senzo Meyiwa as well as the nation as a whole are going through with the killers of Senzo Meyiwa still at large. I insist that the SAPS are on track on this matter and working closely with the NPA to bring whoever is responsible to book. The National Police Commissioner and the National Director of Public Prosecutions are working closely with the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services to ensure justice for Senzo Meyiwa. While we have seen criticism in some quarters around the duration of bringing this case to a close, we as the SAPS remain resolute to our work and won't let external distractions get in the way of bringing closure to the Meyiwa family.

I Thank you.
