

Speech by the Deputy Minister of Police, Maggie Sotyu on the occasion of the South African Police Service Budget Vote, Parliament

21 Jul 2014

Speaker;
Minister of Police, Hon. Mr NPT Nhleko;
All Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;
Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Police, Mr. F Beukman;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
All MECs present;
National Commissioner of Police, General MV Phiyega;
All SAPS Top Management present;
Secretary of Police, Ms J Irish-Qhobosheane;
Executive Director of IPID, Mr McBride;
Chairperson of PSIRA, Mr T Bopela;
All Police Officers present;
Members of CPFs present;
Traditional Leadership and Civil Society present;
Distinguished guests'
Youth present;
Ladies and gentlemen;

Speaker.

Our greatest icon, the late former President Nelson Mandela, once said, "Our achievements, as the ANC-led government are very significant. We often fail to claim our own victories. At the same time, however, it is the mark of a serious political movement and government that, we are prepared to be open, honest, and self-critical where necessary".

Today, on behalf of our South African Police Service (SAPS), we, as the Ministry of Police, arise in front of all South Africans to proclaim that this organisation, the SAPS, supported by our ANC-led Government, has indeed for the past 20 years continued to fulfill and immediately fix where it fails, in its constitutional mandate.

Speaker,

Therefore, today, we will not be apologetic about the strides this Department of Police has taken thus far, together with the people of South Africa, to move South Africa forward, and to unite all South Africans against all types of crime.

Yes, we will not be ashamed to admit where we had erred. Most importantly, we will vividly show how we have been intervening to remedy those faults and shortcomings in the South African Police Service.

So, let me start with the good story to tell. The President has made two critical calls as per our electoral mandate: (1) we need to accelerate the implementation of radical socio-economic transformation; and (2) Central to this radical transformation agenda is the prioritisation of youth empowerment and employment.

Speaker,

We all know that, more than 20 years ago, when our young Black youth wanted to join the police force, they were refused, solely because they did not possess a driver's license.

This strict requirement prejudiced and discriminated against these young people, in particular those from the rural areas, who wished and had a good potential to be police officers.

We can now announce that the department has taken a conscious decision to waive the driver's license as a requirement for enlistment in SAPS for 10% of new recruits.

In addition, all members of the SAPS are now supported to have driver's licenses through the SAPS K53 Programme, done at the SAPS Benoni and Bishop Lavis SAPS Academies, which are also testing stations for the SAPS.

Speaker,

In this instance, we wish to convey our sincerest appreciation to Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA) and our progressive business people, like Mr. Mpengesi, who have partnered with the SAPS to train 1 000 recruits for the Financial Year 2013/14. 1 500 more will be trained for the Financial Year 2014/15.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we have good stories to tell as we continue celebrating 20 years of freedom.

The SAPS leadership always aligns itself with the conscience and soul of the nation, which is seeking desperately for employment and a better life in South Africa.

Currently, the South African Police Service has over 40 000 reservists. Under normal circumstances, reservists are meant to be full-time workers who, from time-to-time, would volunteer their time, to work and support the SAPS in their operations.

But, the reality is that, 90% of the reservists that we currently have, are unemployed and thus solely depend on the stipends and incentives they get from their local police stations.

Speaker,

As mandated by the Minister of Police to oversee the Administration and Visible Policing of the SAPS, I actively support the notion that, no reservist, who has a good standing in terms of the Law, will be thrown in to the streets.

It is with this reason that the Minister and myself support the Reservist Pilot Project.

This project solely concerns itself with re-training the reservists as security guards for Government buildings, instead of using unknown and un-vetted security guards. So far, 1572 reservists have been recruited and re-trained, and they are all employed under the Public Service Act.

Speaker,

Moving forward with this Pilot Project, we will further engage and invite other Government Departments to partner with the SAPS, so that all these 40 000 plus reservists are retrained and employed as security guards for Government buildings, and to secure the outskirts of big malls.

So, we will have to revisit the current National Instruction on the Revised Reservist System, and rectify issues of criteria.

The partnership that the SAPS forged with the Department of Basic Education in 2011 has, indeed become the epitome and illustrator of the ethos of “Together We Move South Africa Forward” for the SAPS.

After the formal Protocol Launch on 6 August 2013 we have thus far visited five Provinces (Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and Mpumalanga), and in the process, brought various stakeholders and Government Departments together to rollout the Schools Safety Community Outreach Programme in the provinces.

Speaker,

This programme is helping raise awareness among children and young learners regarding crime and violence, substance abuse, Satanism, and other social ills, and their impact on individuals, families and their education.

We will also be strengthening community sectors with tools to hold us accountable and to ensure that this Schools Safety Programme becomes effective and sustainable.

I will be approaching and requesting the Minister of Monitoring and Evaluation to assist us with the development of a user-friendly monitoring instrument, to quickly remedy the teething problems encountered by the roll-out of this Programme.

Speaker,

The opportunities created by this ANC-led Government, are great, across all National Departments, including the Department of Police.

In the same vein, these past 20 years have brought us challenges that we still face as a government and as a department. These are great, and we do acknowledge that, as government in general and as the SAPS in particular, we have only partially realized our full potential.

We thus whole-heartedly commit ourselves as the Department of Police, to the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030: to proactively tackle our challenges head-on and without fear.

The development and completion of this Vision initiated by our President, has put to shame all those heinous haters of this ANC-Government. We consistently hear nonsensical rhetoric that this Government does not know what it is doing; they claim it is rudderless. How wrong they are!

I can safely say in this House and to the public at large, that without this NDP Vision 2030, we would have not been able to identify, articulate and remedy our mistakes and flaws, as the SAPS.

Today, the SAPS Leadership can pinpoint and re-prioritize our Programmes as informed by the Justice Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) priorities identified in the NDP.

Speaker,

The NDP demands of the SAPS that all people, irrespective of gender, race, class, religion, sexual orientation and ethnicity, living in South Africa feel safe at home, at school, at work, and enjoy an active community life free of fear of crime.

To achieve this vision, the SAPS will require mustering inter-relations and cooperative work with other departments and other stakeholders such as the criminal justice system, local government, community, private sector, religion and cultural fraternities.

So, as our icon, the late Madiba, said: "it is the mark of a serious political movement and government that we are prepared to be open, honest, and self-critical where necessary," and so we will now outline our past mistakes and the decisive interventions we took, to remedy the flaws.

Speaker,

First, we naively closed our specialized units on Family Violence, Sexual Offences and Child Protection (FCS) unit, when we were at the beginning of our young democracy. But, with time, we realised our mistakes emanating from inevitable inexperience.

Credit then must go to the ANC-led government led by His Excellency, Jacob Zuma, for a decisive decision to re-establish and re-open the FCS Units across the country.

We can report to the public that, from the Year 2010-2013, there are more than 1500 life sentences posed on those heinous criminals who are baby rapists, baby killers, child molesters, and women abusers, thanks to these re-established units.

To further beef up the effectiveness of these units, we will provide more resources for easy access to both investigator and victim.

Speaker,

Secondly, for more than 18 years, we erred in remedying the injustices and discrimination exercised against our members of former Non-Statutory Forces integrated within the SAPS in 1994.

All former SAP, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei (TBVC) police officers who were integrated within the SAPS during the amalgamation of these various police forces, were correctly placed and ranked, and received and continue to receive all due benefits from the employer.

Indeed, all former Non-Statutory Forces (NSF) members integrated within other security departments such as State Security and South African National Defence Force (SANDF) were also correctly integrated. But, not within SAPS. These members lacked career progression, faced constructive dismissals, experienced destituteness and illnesses.

Speaker,

Today, we can report progress to this house and to our police officers. There is a functioning NSF Project Office with nine Provincial Project Offices in the nine provinces; and there is a SAPS NSF Project Plan with 5 deliverables on (1) Full service recognition; (2) Equitable pension; (3) Allocation of Leave Days; (4) Re-ranking; and (5) Skills Development.

So far, a total of 305 active former NSF members have been captured and their respective services are now fully recognised. We can also report here that 904 members' pension are now recognised as well.

This project goes further to service non-active, retired and deceased former members of NSF that integrated in the SAPS, and their dependants, to receive their long-over due benefits.

Speaker,

Thirdly, the issue of municipal, judicial and policing demarcation areas has been detrimental to many of our ordinary people, to accessing the justice system.

Whilst we are awaiting the Green Paper to review the current White Paper on Safety and Security, the Department of Police has since sent out a National Instruction to all Police Stations Commanders, instructing them that no person should be sent away on reason of policing demarcation.

Speaker,

The NDP calls upon the SAPS Leadership to ensure that, we strengthen the SAPS's recruitment drive in order to get the best of the best police officer.

We are proud to say that the National Commissioner of Police, General Phiyega and her team, are heeding to this call. The SAPS is laying a solid foundation for an equitable, professional, skilled, patriotic, committed and honest police officer.

As part of professionalizing the SAPS, we have approved changes to the recruitment strategy of entry-level constables to ensure that only the best-suited candidates are allowed in the SAPS.

Speaker,

Before, student police officers had only six months to get the basic training at the various SAPS Academies.

But, today there are rigorous recruitment processes, which last over two years, starting with the community consultation and screening of the candidate, where Community Police Forums (CPF), Schools, and Churches get consulted on the character and eligibility of every police officer candidate.

After the community vetting, fitness assessment and other tests, the candidate will then be placed in a grooming camp, the second-to-last step of the recruitment strategy.

In this grooming camp, the recruits undergo training on issues such as loyalty, patriotism, professional conduct, the National Anthem of the country and its significance, etc.

Speaker,

This way of recruitment will contribute to the zero-tolerance approach towards corruption and to deliver the caliber of a police officer that will serve the people of this country with dignity and pride.

We thus ensure the meeting of a goal of the NDP by professionalizing the SAPS. The revised strategy will also go a long way towards eliminating problems such as nepotism and corruption.

I want to conclude my speech by making these following decisive announcements. As Police Leadership, we have been burying our police officers weekly in this July month.

Indeed, we are also experiencing a problem of police suicides, filicides (killing of own children), familicides (wiping out the whole family) and femicides (killing of one's wife/girlfriend). It is with this reason that we have decided, with the Minister, that we will pay special attention on police officer wellness in its entirety.

We will revisit all the recommendations made by the station commanders at the SAPS Top 1 500 Conference, and implement them.

Speaker,

We will review some of the draconian policies that degrade and negate the police officers' work environment; their living conditions; their career progression; and indeed their dependents' livelihoods when they have passed on.

By the end of this 2014/15 Financial Year, I would have already requested the National Commissioner of Police to conduct a comprehensive audit, to review all police officers at ranks below Captain, to ascertain how many should have been promoted but remain stagnant in the same rank.

This process will not be confused with the current specific project we have on the former NSF members integrated in the SAPS

Speaker,

We strongly believe that to have a highly motivated police officer that responds daily to complaints and crimes scenes, we need to look after his/her daily working needs.

At the same time, a police officer must also be able to motivate him/herself as, one wise person said:

"No one is compelled to choose the profession of a police officer, but having chosen it, everyone is obliged to live up to the standard of its requirements."

Law enforcement is a tough career, but it can be rewarding if the right candidate is recruited into the SAPS.

Speaker,

Last but not least, we will ensure by the end of this Financial Year that, both the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) and the Civilian Secretariat of Police, would have embarked on an intensive public awareness campaign, to inform the public about their respective Constitutional mandates.

The public must be made aware of the fact that the Civilian Secretariat deals mainly with all complaints received from the public. Specific complaints on police misbehavior and criminality will then be referred to and be thoroughly investigated by the IPID.

Memoranda of Understanding will also be signed and ratified between the SAPS, the Civilian Secretariat and the IPID to formalise their coordinated, collaborated and integrated work, for an effective respective role in police oversight.

Speaker,

Over the last 20 years we have triumphed, we have learnt from our mistakes, and for the next 20 years, we will strive to overcome our differences, build meaning and set directions together as government, as civil society, as communities, and as people of South Africa to move South Africa forward against crime.

Yes, as government, we have started to get smarter and more authentic as we fight crime.

I thank you.

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