

Police Ministry Republic of South Africa Budget Vote Speech by Honourable Nkosinathi Nhleko, Mp, Cape Town

21 Jul 2014

'Building a united front against crime and corruption'

House Chair

Deputy Minister of Police

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Police

Members of the Portfolio Committee

Honourable members

The National Commissioner of Police and Provincial Commissioners

Members of the South African Police Service

Members of the Community Police Forum

Esteemed guests

Fellow South Africans

Ladies and gentlemen

A pillar of strength, knowledge and intellectual capability in South Africa, Ms Nadine Gordimer passed on a week ago. As a country, we have become poorer. We draw solace from the fact that Ms Gordimer lived her life well; to the service of human kind. We take this opportunity to pass on condolences to family, friends and society at large.

We present this budget vote in the month in which we commemorate our hero and icon, the late Dr Nelson Mandela; the former President. We are guided by his exhortations and legacy. In this regard we commit ourselves to his ideals that he fought for; and recalling that he was hounded and incarcerated for 27 years so that we can stand here today and proclaim that South Africa indeed does belong to those who live in it – black and white. Indeed, it is no wonder that South Africans of all hues fanned across the country on Friday, 18th July to spend 67 minutes doing good in remembrance.

And in our midst today we have some of the everyday heroes – the men and women in blue who make our lives better. From Limpopo, Captain Tinus Erasmus, Constable Tunyeko Mongwe and Constable Victor Moloto who put their lives at great risk helping crash survivors out of the explosives truck that had crashed only to be at the receiving end of the explosion themselves. Constable Thembakazi Jacobs brings hope to domestic abuse survivors in the Khayelitsha area. And off course, Warrant officer Nico Smallboy, who is a reservist who is our worthy winner of the National Prestige Award.

These are the heroes that cement our resolve to bring together all our people irrespective of race, gender, creed and religion, or any other basis for discrimination. We are so directed by the Freedom Charter. We further aspire to the creation of a state where our people are free, safe and able to raise our children in a stable society.

In 1992, the ANC asserted in its Ready to Govern document that; our role is to achieve better policing, and an efficient criminal justice system with the involvement of our people in the fight against crime and mobilise to refurbish the moral fabric of our South African society.

We are directed by this policy position to ensure that, amongst other things:

- Policing is based on community support and participation;

- Police remain accountable to society and the community it serves through its democratically elected institutions;
- Policing continues to be subjected to public scrutiny and open debate;
- Allegations of police misconduct are dealt with by an independent complaints and investigation mechanisms;
- A police service that continues to strive for high performance standards.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa mandates us; “to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and secure the inhabitants of the Republic and their property, and to uphold and enforce the law” and further, it calls upon the “Minister of Police to to promote good relations between the police and the community and to assess the effectiveness of visible policing”.

We recommit ourselves to these ideals and further, take stock of the journey that has been travelled thus far; importantly, continue to interrogate as to what it is that needs to be done going forward.

We should recall that the battle against crime cannot be separated from the war on want and that as SAPS we are called upon to maintain law and order in the face of extreme poverty. A week ago, I sat down with a family in New Brighton in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan and listened to the harrowing story of how criminals brazenly walked into the house, demanded to see someone and without a flinch, shot and killed a lady at point blank range, over a petty argument. Alongside the MEC for Security and Safety and other officials, we were struck not so much by the pain of death but rather the hopelessness of the situation that family found itself in of harrowing abject poverty- to say the least.” This is the scene that plays itself over and over again in families and communities across our country and oftentimes, this feeds into the crime wave and we cannot be blind to this.

In pursuing our ideal of a safe and secure environment, we are conscious of the fact that our role as the police service is at the tail end of this process. It is for these reasons that we are advocating for an integrated approach to issues of policing and social stability. For us to succeed in this approach we need to work with other organs of state, business, non-governmental organisations, research and tertiary institutions.

This ideal finds traction in the National Development Plan (NDP) which has been crafted and adopted as the blueprint for the future. The NDP envisages a state where the police work closely with communities, where real partnerships emerge among the different organs of state to ensure that the root causes of crime and criminality are addressed before they pose a major threat to our society.

With this in mind, through the Medium Term Strategic Framework, the SAPS will focus on the following key strategic priorities:

- reduce the number of serious crimes
- combat border and cyber crime
- increase the percentage of trial ready case dockets for serious crimes
- stabilise public protests
- enhance local police capability.

Further, in this financial year, we are going to introduce and or reintroduce the following legislative and policy reviews:

- a comprehensive review of the SAPS Act to align it with the Constitution
- research and policy into reducing the barriers to the reporting of cases of violence against women and children, serial murders and rapes.
- a review on how CPF and CSF can assist the police in the stabilisation of areas affected by Service Delivery Protests
- research on the assessment of police deployments and how these impact on crime
- legislative policy and research into the impact of Firearm legislation on Crime and the need to investigate areas of legislation that requires strengthening.

In our 2014 election manifesto, we said we can move South Africa forward by forging a compact between government and its citizens in ensuring that being safe becomes the normal state of our country. There is an interwoven thread between the Freedom Charter, the Strategy and Tactics, NDP and the ANC election manifesto which also points to a consistent aspiration and wish for a better life in conditions of peace, safety and security.

We commit the South African Police Service to community engagement, listening and of being one with the people that we serve. We are also obliged to fight crime and restoring the citizens' faith and trust in our law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system. For us to achieve this, we should take a cue from KZN province, who have articulated, correctly so, that we need to build a united front against crime and corruption.

South African citizens need to embrace that which is good with our police and reject that which is bad. We appeal to all our citizens to use designated institutions of policing to deal with matters of policing and conduct by the police.

We are extremely concerned by the spate of killings of our policemen and women and call on our communities to mobilise against such a scourge. It should be taken into cognisance that, South Africans through their taxes pay a lot of money to train our police men and women; therefore as society we must ask ourselves as to why we should keep quiet in the face of a concerted destructive campaign waged against our policemen and women. We appreciate the work that has been done by the Mpumalanga province in highlighting the cost to society around this issue; and for coining the theme: 'You kill the police, you kill the community'.

"Kufanele sonke ngobuningi bethu siphakame, silwe nesihluku esingaka sokubulawa kwabantu bomthetho. Uma sihluleka ukukwenza lokhu, kusho ukuthi sobe asinandaba nokuthi abantwana bethu sobashiyela ikusasa elinjani. Ngobuningi bethu, kufanele sisukume sithi: 'wabalala iphoyisa, wabalala umphakathi'.

As part of the process of professionalisation in the police service, we have approved changes to the recruitment strategy of entry level constables with a view to ensure that only the best-suited candidates are recruited into the SAPS. All our new recruits will be taken through rigorous testing for their suitability before they start with their formal training. Further, they will be taken through grooming camps for screening purposes, vetting, written assessments, physical fitness as well as other diagnostic tests on behaviour, patriotisms and culture.

These changes have been introduced as part of the Community Based Recruitment Strategy that is aimed at addressing challenges such as pending and or previous convictions, fraudulent qualifications and to avoid nepotism in the recruitment of officers. In terms of this strategy, the role of the community in commenting on their suitability will also assist in completing the 360 degree cycle of suitability testing.

We have further put in place mechanisms to build capacity within our crime intelligence units all-over the country. A number of critical senior and middle management positions were filled in the reporting period. This is an important unit that helps the police in the fight against crime and its significance cannot be overemphasised.

We will further ensure that the current members of the police service are taken through rigorous sessions to understand the code of conduct. We are expecting each and every member to acknowledge and understand the contents of the code before signing; in order to make sure that they are accountable.

Our approach on professionalisation of the police service will contribute to the zero-tolerance towards corruption and nepotism; and deliver the calibre of a police official who will serve the people of this country with dignity and pride.

In 2010, an initiative was undertaken by government to strengthen and realign the role of the Civilian Secretariat for Police as part of strengthening civilian oversight of the police. The initiative involved a two-pronged approach namely; institutional reform and organisational reform.

In addressing institutional reform, the Civilian Secretariat for Police Act was passed and put into operation by December 2011. The Act established the Secretariat as a separate department with its own budget and lines of reporting. The Act also requires provincial oversight roles to be aligned with those of the Secretariat as part of strengthening both inter- governmental cooperation and provincial monitoring of SAPS. All provinces have begun the process of aligning their structures and process with those of the Secretariat. In addition, organisational reform processes have started which has seen the structure grow from 38 people to over 114 people between 2011 and 2014.

In his state of the nation address in 2013, the President announced the establishment of the Executing Structure for POP to ensure that public order is effectively restored and that national stability is ensured.

Given the country's socio-political circumstance, in 2013/14 financial year, we responded by upgrading equipment for POP unit with a specific focus on the following:

- The designing and procurement of new operational vehicles
- The development of a specification by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for a water cannon that can be locally manufactured
- The procurement of Long Range Acoustic Devices (LRAD)
- The procurement of audio recording devices, video cameras and accessories as well as ammunition and pyrotechnics.

In the intervening period, 1826 members successfully attended POP refresher training, on crowd management techniques for operational readiness; 60 members were trained as video camera operators and information managers to capture footage during crowd-related incidents.

All these efforts are conducted in line with the national vision of demilitarising the police services as well as putting in place a civilian approach to public order policing with a view to reduce the levels of militaristic or perceived militaristic approach to public order policing.

Another project worth a mention is the Frontline Service Delivery Projects which is currently being piloted in nine police stations i.e. one station per province. The key objectives of the project are to ensure that police service points are accessible and standardised to adequately support professional policing, provide a professional and quality-based service to the people of South Africa and to enhance engagement with all stakeholders in the fight against crime.

The project is focusing on four critical dimensions of service delivery i.e. individual as an employee, physical touch points (environment), quality of services delivered as well as stakeholders. Interventions undertaken to date include a dialogue with station and cluster commanders and engagement of Old Mutual and Business Against Crime to solicit support. The lessons from these nine pilot stations will be rolled out to 500 police stations.

House chair

In the past few years, there has been a spate of service delivery protests around the country which have stretched our capacity to maintain order as mandated by Section 205 (3) of the Constitution. A total number of 13 575 community related protests incidents were responded to and successfully stabilised. These incidences arose mainly from unrest-related incidents such as labour disputes in the mining, education and transport sectors and dissatisfaction with service delivery by local municipalities.

Of the 13 575 incidents 11 668 were conducted peacefully and 1907 turned violent which led to the arrest of 2 522 individuals. We will continue to attend to these community protests with vigilance as we have done in the past with the sole intention of ensuring that we secure property and life of all South Africans. We also appeal to community leaders to exercise responsible leadership which ensures protection of property and human lives.

It is important to note, as in the words of Ernest Barker, that; “ the claims of liberty have to be adjusted to those of equality; and the claims of both have also to be adjusted to those of cooperation”.

One of our fundamental tasks is to contribute to the strengthening of the Criminal Justice Cluster. On the 22 July 2010 the President mandated the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security cluster to create an anti-corruption task team to fast track the investigation and prosecution of cases of corruption. We have, in partnership with our colleagues in the Justice Cluster, managed to apprehend and prosecute suspected criminals involved in organised crime.

We have established a national task team with the JCPS cluster in line with a 7 point plan; to oversee the roll-out of Community Safety Forums. The Community Safety Forums are managed and coordinated by the Civilian Secretariat for Police. We have currently established 125 Community Safety Forums in the 278 municipalities and the remaining Community Safety Forums will be rolled out in the current financial year.

One of the biggest threats to social stability and economic growth in South Africa is the question of organised crime and drug-trafficking. As his Majesty Isilo SamaBandla Onke, King Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu puts it, that the best way to destroy a nation is to kill its youth. And that is exactly what drugs do. As a society, we should all understand that organised crime and drug trafficking is part of the ideological onslaught against the people of South Africa.

In the period under review, through the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), known as Hawks, we have registered following milestones:

- Thirty five clandestine drug laboratories were dismantled and we will continue to focus in this area.
- We arrested 169 individuals for the illegal purchase, theft and possession of uncut diamonds and unwrought precious metals; A further 927 suspects were arrested for illicit mining.
- We have smashed suspected syndicates for dealing in drugs between South Africa and Tanzania, where a total of 50kg of drugs were seized.
- We arrested 1 218 persons for organised crime and 828 were convicted.
- We arrested 254 persons for drug related crimes with the value of R103-million.

Commercial crime is the most treasonous crime that a human being can ever commit against the state; as it deprives the country of its legitimate tax base. We have recorded these milestones, amongst others:

- 6187 new cases were received, with 3 888 suspects charged, with 2 142 conviction rate.
- We smashed counterfeit card fraud syndicates, as well as gangs operating an advance fee scam, infamously known as 419.

We have also made cyber-crime an area of focus and have a number of successes including the arrest of more than 180 individuals. In combating this phenomenon, the DPCI established Digital Forensic Laboratories to collect and analyze evidence. DPCI will continue to capacitate and develop resources required to meet the evolving criminal standards.

Central to these efforts is beefing up our forensic ability. This is why, together with other government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the private sector hosted the 1st National Forensic Services Conference from 2 to 5 July 2013 – the first of its kind on our continent.

South Africa became the 57th country to assent to legislation that provides a framework to obtain DNA samples from arrested persons and offenders. This forensic DNA capability is a huge step towards a more effective system which would lead to a quicker exoneration of the innocent and detection and conviction of perpetrators.

As part of the gains in the fight against crime, a total number of 2 785 suspects wanted for serious and violent crimes have been traced and arrested during the period under review, including crimes such as murder, and aggravated robbery.

The National Development Plan further dictates to us as the police to have an integrated approach to safety. Our approach in addressing this matter will be evident in how we integrate our activities with those of other entities of the state, private sector organisations, labour and non-governmental organisations as well as other interest groups.

We will continue to foster relations with the private sector in the fight against crime and corruption. We have, in the reporting period, processed the PSIRA Amendment Bill through Parliament with a view to manage and regulate the private security industry better. The Bill seeks to introduce significant changes regarding ownership of private security business by foreign nationals; while at the same time improving

governance of the Authority and addressing the funding of the entity through funds that are appropriated by Parliament. The Private Security Industry Levies Act. will also be tabled for review in order to align it to the changes that took place since it was enacted.

The Private security industry currently employs over 485 000 security officers and has over 8100 active security businesses. This industry is by far one of the leading suppliers of entry-level jobs in the South African labour market with an estimated turn-over of over R50 billion.

Improved operational efficiencies have accelerated industry service delivery and as a result helped the entity to improve its registration average turnaround time from more than 180 days to 19 days. Furthermore, in 2010, the entity was in a critical financial position and successful implementation of the turnaround strategy enabled the authority to achieve a 34% revenue improvement.

Our efforts, working in partnership with communities will still be continued in the current financial year. We are working on a strategy to revitalise our Community Policing Forums with a view to increase their capacity to assist the police in the fight against crime. The training and resourcing of the CPFs will form part of our plans in order to ensure that they become a meaningful stakeholder and resource in the fight against crime.

The South African Police Service has a total 1 137 police stations which are categorised as rural or rural/urban mix. We have to date developed a Rural Safety Strategy that is in the process of implementation. We have also established Rural Safety Priority Committees that are functional with a view to effectively address crime in rural areas in an integrated manner.

The Committees are composed of a number of stakeholders such as organised agriculture, farmers associations, and farm workers associations as well as other government agencies. We have further established partnerships with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs and the National House of Traditional Leaders to enhance the involvement of traditional leaders in safety and security at all levels.

Precisely because we are building a united front against crime and corruption; it is for this reason that we have already started to establish relations with academic and research institutions with a view to develop our capacity as an organisation to deliver on our mandate. These interactions will go a long way in ensuring that strategy, policy, and legislation, are based on research and factual information derived from some of these inputs.

Allow me, house chair, to salute women of our country as we approach August, the month in which we pay homage to the sacrifices of our mothers and sisters in securing freedoms that we now enjoy. It is no coincidence therefore that SAPS, an organisation that has mainly been male dominated, is now under the command of a woman of stature. We will in August, announce a number of initiatives that will expand the role and opportunities for women to play a crucial role in policing.

It would be amiss not to mention the good work done by the Women's Network in the force and the important voice that they have become. Alibongwe!!

Our efforts are about honour and dignity, as we contribute towards a state, as Socrates would put it, a state based on wisdom, courage, discipline and justice. We should rally all sectors of our society in the fight against crime and corruption, as this would only define our human existence. We must do so, so that, indeed as Aristotle puts it, we must do that which; "answers to the whole of goodness, being the exercise of goodness as a whole towards one's neighbour".

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