

REMARKS BY MPUMALANGA HUMAN SETTLEMENTS MEC, HON. VS SIWELA
DURING THE NGWATO HOUSE HAND OVER BY SAPS AT SAND RIVER,
HAZYVIEW, MBOMBELA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.
01ST OCTOBER 2015.

Executive Mayor: Clr S Mathonsi (Mbombela Local Municipality)
Members of the Mayoral Committee
Councilors
Provincial Commissioner, Adv Magadlela
SAPS Leadership
Project Sponsor, Mr. R Matsane
Representatives from Social Development
Officials from Government Departments and SAPS
Ngwato Family
Business Community
Organised Structures
Members of the Media
All Stakeholders

Warm greetings to all of you gathered here today.

The United Nation's Children Charter states that everyone including children has a right to all the basic human needs like water, education, safety and shelter.

This conviction is in line with the expression of the Country's Constitution (Act 108 of 1996).

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child is addressed to governments as representatives of the people, it actually addresses the responsibilities of all members of society.

When I came into contact with the story and horrible ordeal the Ngwatho family experienced, one cannot help but ask what went wrong in society.

I raise this question mainly because this family just like any is part of society and should be protected by this country's laws and to a great extent by members of society.

As dictated by law, governments are obliged to recognize the full spectrum of human rights for all children and consider children in legislative and policy decisions.

While many States are beginning to listen seriously to children's views on many important issues, the process of change is still not moving at a fast speed.

In building a capable and skilled society, children ought to be afforded basic human rights such as education and safety.

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As stated in the report by SAPS it is clear that our moral fiber as society is dying. Simple question though is – how do people in their right mind get to abuse, victimize and terrorise others – as if they are animals.

It may seem a minute incident – but what the children have experienced in the hands of merciless criminals disturbed their schooling, welfare and sense of freedom – whilst at their own community.

According to the national crime statistics released this week, the country has seen an increase in sexual offences and contact crimes, but police actions were also on point.

Their actions and other myriad interventions are as a result of government's safety and security programmes.

The identification of this family through the Safer School's Project has indeed helped to galvanise stakeholders to intervene in their plight.

To the Good Samaritan who secured the house, government cannot ask for more. It is people like you that should be acknowledged as your contribution is making a dent towards providing shelter to the needy.

Whilst this Department is doing all it can to deliver houses to communities, resources are often not permitting to cater for every need and the ever growing demand out there.

That said, your gesture is priceless.

The policy on the provision of housing states that a prospective beneficiary should be 21 years and above, but the Department has taken a conscious decision to be biased towards the elderly, child headed households, people with disability and orphans.

Our gathering here comes just a month away to the start of the 16 Days of Activism of No Violence against Women and Children Campaign.

The campaign is aimed at highlighting the plight of women and children who are abused.

Today's feat is keeping with the campaign's ideals that government must intervene and expose more people to the cruel nature of violence that is distressing society.

This and other campaigns focusing on gender based violence are critical in any democratic society where human rights are fundamental.

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A country like ours views such a campaign and other similar ones as principal to the protection of vulnerable groups within society and the sustenance of our democracy.

We may not - as government provide a police officer in every street - but self policing and reporting criminal activities can assist in dealing with crime.

Whilst appreciating SAPS's compassion and vigour for doing such a great job, we can only hope that other stakeholders in society – not government alone – can have their ears on the ground to intervene in similar circumstances.

As the Ngwato family is moving to their house, may I make a call to community members and structures to ensure that this and other households are protected.

Lastly, may I appeal to all community members to use the recently launched Operation Vuka Sisebente model which aims at increasing coordination and communication amongst stakeholders?

All your challenges must be discussed and where possible addressed at your local war-rooms. Each ward has a war-room.

To the family, receive government's affectionate love and implore you to find closure in the past unfortunate occurrences, but focus in the future.

Our hope and wish is that the young ones stay focused and pursue education for a better future.

“Together we are moving Mpumalanga Forward”

I thank you