



Rhino & Samora Machel Buildings, No. 7 Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Extension 2
Private Bag X11328, Mpumalanga, Mbombela, 1200
Tel: +27 (13) 766 6088, Tel: +27 (13) 766 6087

Litiko Letekubusa
Ngekubambisana
Tekuhlaliswa Kwebantfu
Netendzabuko

Departement van
Samewerkende Regering
Menslike Nedersettings
en Tradisionele Sake

UmNyango weTjhebiswano
laboRhulumende
zokuHlaliswa kwabantu
neenDaba zenDabuko

Press Release

09 August 2025

RECTIFYING A MISTAKENLY CITED INITIATION SCHOOL

The Mpumalanga Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs (CoGHSTA) and its stakeholders would like to correct a media report regarding an erroneously mentioned initiation school where an initiate recently died. It was reported that the death of one initiate early this month was from Mr Chief (real name) Mabena, whilst in actual fact it (death) occurred under Mr Amos Bongani Mlangeni, all from eMalahleni. The Department acknowledges the error and profoundly apologises to have mistakenly cited Mr Chief Mabena who is NOT implicated on the matter. The confusion was created when a certain Mr Mabena (Not the erroneously mentioned Mr Chief Mabena) who was stated by the bereaved family to have participated in the event that led to the boy being initiated illegally and subsequently died.

The beavered family reported that the men that were involved in illegally initiating their late boy was Mr Mlangeni and George Jeffrey Mahlangu, however, one member reported that the principal was Chief Mabena, hence the Task Team reported this matter to the Department. Upon further investigations, the Task Team established that the actual initiation school principal is Mr Mlangeni not Mr Chief Mabena as alluded by the family. The CoGHSTA Task Team subsequently summoned the Ingoma Principal in question (Mr Mlangeni) and his accomplices to the Vosman Police Station in eMalahleni and opened a criminal case against them.

The PICC approved 405 initiation schools that admitted 10, 508 initiates. Only two applications were not approved as they had not complied with the Act, and seven illegal initiation schools were shut-down during the 2025 winter initiation season. The closing of the schools follows unannounced oversight visits conducted by the various regional Ingoma Task Teams to inspect facilities for having the necessary resources and meeting the minimum standards as per Section 30 of the Customary Initiation Act (CIA).

The Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) Chairperson, Ikosi Richard Mahlangu stated that more measures are taken to ensure the safety of initiates and registered schools adherence to safety standards. *"As the committee, we would to unconditionally withdraw the wrong information, acknowledge and apologise to Mr. Chief Mabena and or any person for the harm that this unfortunate reporting might have caused"*. All initiation schools adhering to the Customary Initiation Act (CIA) are highly commended. Together with its stakeholders, the PICC will continue to monitor them and provide the necessary support until the last day of the customary practice. This year's customary practice is anchored on the theme: **Mabahambe Bephila, Babuye Bephila**.

ISSUED BY THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE
CO-OPERATING GOVERNANCE, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
CONTACT PERSON: FREDDY NGOBE – 013 766 6014 / 082 859 4630 / flngobe@mpg.gov.za
