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GLOVES ARE OFF FOR CRIMINALS TERRORISING CONSTRUCTION SITES IN THE COUNTRY

Article by Bukiwe Cimela, Pictures by Maanea Maselesele and Caroline Mokotedi

Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Dean Macpherson says a line in the sand has been drawn, warning that lawlessness in construction sites will not be tolerated. Minister Macpherson was addressing the National Construction Summit aimed at having crime free construction sites in the country.

He says government will no longer be negotiating with criminals just to be able to build essential infrastructure needed by the community. "We are gathering here today in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal - considered by many as ground zero for the so-called 'construction mafia' - to take a stand and say: Enough is enough. Let me be clear, this is not just another talk shop. Today we are taking action", said Macpherson.

The National construction summit was addressed by the DPWI Minister Dean Macpherson, Police Minister Senzo Mchunu, DPWI Deputy Minister Sihle Zikalala and Deputy Finance Minister Ashor Sarupen. In attendance at the summit, were leaders from all three spheres of government including Mayors, MECs, the KwaZulu Natal Premier Thami Ntuli, differently graded construction companies, property developers and owners and industry leaders.

In a bid to protect victims of crime on the construction sites, who may be afraid to open cases in their local areas, due to police collusion with criminals, Police Minister Senzo Mchunu has called on victims to open criminal cases anywhere in the country. Minister Mchunu said police efforts to fight against crime in construction sites have started bearing positive results with a number of arrests. He says the success of arrest has resulted in the community coming out to report extortion incidents that have led to police taking action.

DPWI Minister Macpherson also lamented the delays caused by extortion and hijacking of construction sites by people who demand a portion of the project costs. "It was clear to me that we would never achieve our vision to turn South Africa into a Construction Site, if we were unable to bring an end to the disruption of construction sites. It is clear to me today that we cannot be negotiating with criminals to allow construction projects to continue", said Macpherson.



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