



Publication: Witness, The - Main
Title: KILLINGS MUST BE CURBED
Publish date: 19 Sep 2022
Page: 2

Reach: 11641
AVE:R: 53492.67
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Killings must be curbed

Calls to protect officials and councillors as 'strategic' murders increase

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While political killings have plagued KwaZulu-Natal, a new problem of municipal employees in strategic positions being in danger is starting to emerge.

This month, the communications manager at uMlalazi Local Municipality, Reginald Ngema, also killed.

A bodyguard of a municipal manager in that same municipality was also killed.

Nokuthula Dlamini, a community development worker (CDW) for Ward 16, in the Mtubatuba Local

Municipality, was set alight in her home.

In a recent eThekweni executive meeting, Raymond Rampersad the head of Durban Solid Waste, said three employees were killed at landfill sites by a suspected "syndicate".

This is in addition to the killing of two ward councillors in KZN last week.

Canan Mdletshe, National Freedom Party (NFP) spokesperson said the province was "a ticking time bomb" with the killings and threats of intimidation.

Mdletshe said hung municipali-

ties in KZN have created instability and people are contesting positions through killings.

"The attack and killing of councillors is likely to increase if nothing is urgently done. As we speak, our councillors in hung municipalities are fearing for their lives. If ministers who are not in any danger are protected, then councillors, who are at the coalface of service delivery, must be guarded. In fact, ministers should be stripped of their protection and councillors must be prioritised."

Last month, former MEC for Human Settlements and Public Works,

Jomo Sibiya lamented the conditions that his staff were working under.

Sibiya was speaking after the death of a worker in his department, Mfanafuthi Cele, who was shot and killed in KwaMashu, while on duty on matters relating to the relocation of flood victims.

"We remain concerned about the emotional trauma that our staff are experiencing as a result of harassment and bullying by rogue elements in various parts of the province, especially in eThekweni," said Sibiya.

The KZN Department of Transport, Community Safety and Liaison

said it would hold a meeting soon that would be looking into the killings of public representatives.

"The high-level meeting will look at urgent measures to resolve cases involving the killings of public representatives and discuss mechanisms to proactively end the ongoing heinous crimes in the province," the department said in a statement.

Nokubonga Dinga, South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu) KZN provincial secretary told *The Witness* that besides those in eThekweni, municipal workers have not reported any fears to them.

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