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THE MEC for Transport in community safety and Liaison, Siphon Hlomuka, expressed a view that the recent trend of political killings in KZN especially in Nongoma and Zululand Districts were 'deliberate acts to force by-elections'. | Supplied

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'Political killings deliberate act to force by-elections'

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THE trend of political killings in KwaZulu-Natal, especially in Nongoma and the Zululand Districts, are deliberate acts to force by-elections.

This was an observation shared by the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Siphon Hlomuka yesterday during a media briefing on transport and community safety matters including recent political killings.

Hlomuka said in Nongoma there was a trend of assassinating councillors that started immediately after the coalition led by the NFP, ANC and EFF took over.

He said the government was concerned with the continuing assassination of public representatives, mainly that of councillors from various municipalities.

"The areas of late that are giving us problems are eThekweni, Mkhambathini and KwaNongoma. When the IFP was in power we did not see these rampant attacks and threats to councillors' lives," said Hlomuka.

He said the department would reconvene the Multi-Party-Political Intervention Committee against political killings next week.

"We want to ensure that we work

towards achieving political tolerance in our province and ensure a stable and peaceful political environment," said Hlomuka.

The committee next week was set to promote democratic co-existence between all political parties; defuse all inter and intra-political conflict and intervene on all issues that may lead to a stand-off between political parties.

Hlomuka also revealed that several projects would be opened including D1126 in Taylors Halt, Nkunzi River Bridge in Ladysmith and Gumatane River Bridge under Ugu District.

"We have also completed constructing eight bridges under the Welisizwe Bailey bridges which we are doing together with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure – and the SANDE. By the end of October, we are planning to have completed 13 of these bridges," said Hlomuka.

He slammed the violent protests that hinder infrastructure development meant to benefit communities.

"We condemn incidents of violent protests in Bergville, Newcastle and Pietermaritzburg which are being led by some of these internal contract workers who are employed through the Vukayibambe Routine Road Maintenance Programme. Some protested at DoT Head Office in Pietermaritz-

burg yesterday and started stoning the vehicles of officials who were coming to work and people passing by our department," said Hlomuka.

He said they had instructed the head of the department Siboniso Mbhele to identify those responsible so that action could be taken against them.

"Police are also investigating cases of public violence and malicious damage to properties. Two state vehicles were damaged and one staff member sustained injuries during the protest."

Hlomuka also expressed concern about the rising crime rates, especially cash-in-transit heist crimes.

"We remain concerned about the increasing incidents of daring and brazen cash-in-transit heists in our province. However, we appreciate the rapid and decisive response by our law-enforcement officers working with private security companies," he said.

The MEC also revealed that the department has allocated more than R6.7 million to support the youth with careers relevant to the future of the Department of Transport and the entire sector. These include engineering, geographic information, transport economics and projects.

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