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to ensure the safety of themselves and their possessions, noting the prevalence of crime and fraud, and that thugs are brazen and callous, acting with impunity.

Police and private security personnel, primarily in and around busy areas, business and entertainment centres and hot spots, need to be visible and alert in carrying out their onerous duties. Children, grandchildren, family and friends do not allow elders to go out alone to places that would place them at risk. Go the extra mile and accompany them, as far as possible.

In my just over two-thirds of a century in the university of life, I have experienced two armed robberies and a hijacking at gunpoint during which I was taken on a terror ride of about 6km. It lasted about 10 minutes but felt like an eternity.

Thanks to police, security personnel and other persons/ organisations such as benefactors, community police forums and NGOs who undertake their duties diligently to render a free community service so that we are safe and have peace of mind. You are a blessing to humanity. May you and your loved ones be safe. **SIMON T DEHAL** | Verulam

## MECs fail people on service delivery

THE current five-year parliamentary term has seen four different ANC Human Settlements and Public Works MECs in KwaZulu-Natal brought in, in a last-ditch effort to rescue these critical departments.

The first MEC, Peggy Nkonyeni, lasted less than two years. After

that, Jomo Sibiya took over for just over a year before handing over the reins to Ntuthuko Mahlaba. He was only around for nine months until current MEC, Sipho Nkosi, took over. Regrettably, the performance within both of these departments has only become worse with each new MEC. While the maximum budget is spent, under-performance increases.

KZN's housing backlog has increased to more than a million and there are now more than 1 000 informal settlements in the province. This while transit camp residents live in deplorable conditions waiting for this ANC-run government to deliver. This as defaulting contractors continue to do departmental work and as thousands of people grow increasingly tired of waiting and start building their own shacks – often on unsafe land.

Within Public Works, there is also an increase in the degradation and hijacking of government-owned property - without any real intervention. To date, none of the MECs have dealt with the long-standing issue of Ulundi's hijacked parliamentary housing. This while, schools and other government-owned buildings have had their utilities disconnected due to a failure to pay their municipal rates.

MEC Sibiya will be remembered for the snail pace delivery of defective Temporary Residential Units and the abandonment of flood victims in halls.

MEC Mahlaba was continually missing in action and showed very little interest in his role. His replacement – the current MEC Nkosi – has inherited a mess, but is choosing to deal with it in all the wrong ways by negotiating with construction mafias. Recently MEC

Nkosi implied that the provincial housing budget would be utilised to build houses for military veterans who had not been approved as such by national government.

**MARLAINE NAIR, MPL** | DA KZN  
Spokesperson on Human Settlements/Public Works

## Question mark hangs over cop competency

LAW enforcement agencies, especially the SAPS, have come under a lot of criticism recently, especially from loved ones of the deceased, for shoddy work, stagnant progress and their inability to make arrests.

Seelan Pillay, a former policeman and Community Police Forum head in Bayview, was gunned down more than a year ago in a drive-by shooting. No arrests have been made and his family are distraught about the lack of tangible progress. Are the police adopting a willy-nilly and perfunctory attitude?

Looking at the glaring inconsistencies and contradictions in the Senzo Meyiwa murder trial, one wonders whether some of the detectives are qualified to carry out exhaustive investigative work. They seem to be incorrigibly retrograde and immobilised in amber – a platonic failure of Herculean proportions. Are they overworked and at risk? Are their wellness programmes (psychological and psychiatric) not being managed properly?

The latest craze in crime-infested South Africa is the mushrooming of private security companies.

A lot of praise was heaped on security companies for their sterling