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Author: THAKASANI KHUMALO



RESIDENT Thomas Ngcobo, speaking during the crime-fighting imbizo held at KwaNdengezi Sports Grounds yesterday, said the police do not respond fast enough when there is a crime. | TUMI PAKKIES African News Agency (ANA)

GUNS, DRUGS CITED

KZN government hosts crime-fighting imbizo

THAKASANI KHUMALO
thakasani.khumalo@inl.co.za

A CRIME-FIGHTING imbizo was hosted by the provincial government in KwaNdengezi yesterday following several incidents of mass murder and gender-based violence in the province.

Among those who attended were Transport, Community Safety and Liaison MEC Siphon Hlomuka, Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs MEC Siboniso Duma and Finance MEC Peggy Nkonyeni.

House of Traditional Leaders chairperson Inkosi Rubert Sifiso Shinga was also among the guest speakers.

Zwelani Madondo, a resident of Luganda, near Mariannhill, said crime was out of control and the community was terrified. "There are a lot of unlicensed guns, which leads to more shootings. The crime here is mostly

related to drugs. I wish the government could intervene and find ways to curb the crime," Madondo said.

A resident from Thornwood, Andiswa Msani agreed that drug dealing was the root cause of crime in the area and said even schoolchildren were involved. "Maybe the government should bring back sports to our schools here and create more job opportunities for our youth. Many of those who are involved with the crime are people who are young," said Msani.

Shinga said that as traditional leaders they were concerned about the killings, not only in KwaNdengezi and Mariannhill but throughout the province, adding that fighting crime required residents to get involved and report offenders. He also urged young people to stay away from drugs and drug dealing and encouraged them to participate in community projects.

"We wish to say to the community that as the House of Traditional Leaders we will always be there to fight crime, and that is why we plead with the community to join us on this journey; we cannot do it alone, the government cannot do it alone," Shinga said.

Duma said the number of murder cases in the area was concerning. "We visited Mariannhill police station and discovered that there is a significant need to invest more in it because it is the only nearby police station where the community can report a crime. The Public Works Department will embark on an 18-month project to renovate the station."

"We are working on installing surveillance cameras and more street lights to catch perpetrators," Duma said. He added that this was one of several imbizos the government would hold this year to curb crime in the province.