

Crime Awareness Campaign - 18 March 2005 Speech by the Mayor of Lepelle Nkumpi

Program director I am honoured to have been accorded this opportunity to come and address this meeting.

As South Africans we are eternally grateful to the Almighty for the things that He has brought us through. When we look over the past ten years we can say that in spite of the little discomforts that we have had to endure we have as a country been living our dream. And that dream was to see ourselves one day living in a country of our birth without fear of intimidation, prejudice, discrimination and all the evils that have characterized our country for so many years. We are aware that many of our brothers and sisters, who have passed on, some of them in the course of fighting for our liberation, all had this dream of living in a country where they could truly be free. They unfortunately never got a chance to see this in their lifetime. But we are living that dream.

If someone who had left the country twenty years ago was to come back today he would definitely not recognize it. He could actually be forgiven for thinking that he was dreaming. One of the things that he would not be able to understand is the fact that twenty years ago the police and anything related to the security services was seen as part of the system and therefore as the enemy. Most people who worked or associated themselves with the police were risking their very own lives. In the South Africa of today we however find a different story. This is a country where the people value the freedom that they have waited so long for and will go to all measures to ensure that it is protected. This is why we find that in the current situation we see the police as our friends and protector. We know that we can sleep better at night knowing that there are people who are watching out for us.

In recognition of this important function of the police we have found that our people have joined hands with the police in partaking in community policing forums. In Lebowakgomo in particular we have seen the effect of this on the crime levels. I am sure that the police will say much on this. But as a municipality we would just like to thank our people for the cooperation that they have shown the police. Let us remember that by doing this we are making their job that much more easier. For those who are still sitting on the fence let me urge you to get involved. The simplest way to do this is to find out where your nearest community policing forum is and join in with them. By doing so you are doing yourself and your family a favour.

I am hereby making a call to our people to be on the look out for those amongst us who will show resistance to working together with the police. Remember that it is only those who have a reason to be afraid who will not want anything to do with the police. The word of God itself says in Romans 13: 3-5 that the police are not a cause of fear for those who do good but for those who do evil. It further goes on to say that if you do evil then you must fear for the sword is not in the hands of the police for nothing but to bring punishment on the evil doer. Let us therefore be wary of those who fear the police. I am however assured that most of our people are peace loving and will therefore do all in their power to cooperate with the police.

As we start the second decade of our democracy let us remember that democracy and freedom are a choice that we make as people. As people we make a choice to hear what the other person has to say without refusing him his point of view even though it might be different from ours. We make a choice to let the other person live his life the way that he wants to even though his lifestyle might be different from our own. In short democracy says that we must let the other person be free to be himself. In the same way that it is us as the people who make democracy work it is still us who by our own choices can decide to take democracy away. When, for example, a person chooses to live a life of crime he is taking away my freedom to live my life the way that I want to live. I suddenly find that I cannot walk where I want to walk at the time that I want to. Democracy therefore depends on us the people to defend it. This we do by ensuring that we cooperate with the police to bring to book all those perpetrators of violence. As we start this second decade of our democracy let us see a new country free from all forms of crime and violence and let us work towards it. Nobody can give us that country but ourselves. Let us recognize that the workers of crime, be it petty or major, are the new enemy. We are not going to allow them to take away the freedom that we got through the shedding of blood and loss of life for so many of our people. Let us fight this new enemy assured of the fact that the whole government system is behind us. The government at national, provincial and local level is spending vast amounts of money to ensure that we vanquish this enemy. Let us therefore work together to ensure that this is achieved. Programme director I believe that the people of this province and of this municipality in particular are a peace loving people. Because of this I believe we are going to see an unprecedented growth in the number of people involved in community policing.

Let me again assure all our security people that as a municipality we are aware and appreciate the good work that you are doing for us. We pledge to give you all the support that you need.

Thank you.