

# 'Stem tide of criminality'

ELFAS TORERAI AND ELLEKIA DIRE

THE authorities in Rustenburg have urged residents not to take the law into their hands in the wake of eight buildings set on fire and residents running amok on Wednesday.

One person was reported killed as residents joined taxi drivers in what they said was a campaign to rid the city of drug peddling and prostitution.

They also pointed a finger at the police for allegedly turning a blind eye to drug dealing.

Rustenburg mayor Mpho Khunou during a visit to the site of the destruction yesterday said his administration was determined to work together with residents to rid the city of the scourge of prostitution, drug and human trafficking.

Kunou confirmed that eight buildings including four guest houses and three residential houses in Rustenburg East were burnt.

A vehicle was also set alight during the mayhem.

"At the moment we, can't give an accurate cost for the damage as these are private properties. I am sure at a later stage we will be able to give an accurate estimate of the damage," he said.

He said the tension since more than a week ago started in Boitekong township following an attack on a taxi driver by gangsters that led to retaliation by taxi drivers.

"There are gangsters calling themselves SVK in the area that attacked the driver and the retaliation sparked the initial outbreak of violence to the city including the taxi rank.

The scourge should be thoroughly investigated as a matter of extreme urgency," the mayor said.

He said on Monday the municipality

had met with the taxi operators where they expressed serious concern that the police were allegedly in collusion with drug traffickers.

"Taxi drivers said that they would report drugs and human trafficking to the police who they said were not taking action, but claimed that the same police were quick to take action against the taxi drivers during the initial outbreak of violence," Khunou said.

He said his administration would continue with joint operations with members of the municipal police, the police and other stakeholders to deal with the matter.

Khunou said that the municipality was intending to close more brothels that were believed to be behind the scourge.

"Since the start of last year we have closed at least 25 brothels and we are now targeting to close to 30 more, despite being a difficult task. You close this one and it relocates to other areas around the city," he said.

Community safety MEC Dr Mpho Motlhabane condemned the burning of buildings and called on both residents and the police to work together to resolve the problem.

"We do not condone acts of vigilantism by residents and we equally want to call on the police to regain the confidence of the public by making sure they do what is right," he said.

North West police commissioner Lit-Gen Baile Motswenyane visited the city yesterday to rally her troops to restore peace and order.

She condemned the violent incidents and warned members of the community to refrain from damaging property.

"Those who are doing this must know that they are committing crime and that drastic action will be taken including against our own members.



**CRIMINAL ACTIVITY:** Eight buildings, including residential houses and guest houses in Rustenburg's inner city, were set alight, allegedly by gangsters.

We are making a humble appeal to members of the community to work together with the police to ensure that those who are behind these unlawful

acts are brought to book," she said.

DA provincial leader Joe McGluwa said that the absence of good police officers in the community had created

a vacuum exploited by criminals.

"In order to stem the tide of criminality in our communities, honest and well-resourced police officers are needed,

armed with proactive and responsible crime-busting programmes of action," he said.

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# DRUGS, BROTHELS WAR

12/01/18 Pretoria News New Pg 01 DOP

## Rustenburg calm after turmoil

**VIRGILATTE GWANGWA**  
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**C**ALM appeared to have been restored in Rustenburg yesterday as police patrolled the area where unrest broke out on Wednesday. Six buildings were torched, but foreign nationals feared more violence might break out last night and today.

While it was business as usual for businesses which were not looted and torched, foreign nationals remained tense after many had lost their livelihoods when their businesses were set alight.

A high police presence remained on the streets, with officers patrolling the central business district where buildings had been destroyed. They also kept a close eye on the taxi rank.

However, there were still threats that *inkabi* (hitmen) from Eastern Cape and Joburg were possibly on their way to Rustenburg to assist taxi drivers with cleaning up the area from drug dealers.

This comes after Rustenburg came to a standstill on Wednesday afternoon when an angry mob set buildings alight which they believed were drug dens and brothels.

Speaking to the Pretoria News, members of the community said the unrest started after taxi operators decided they had had enough of nyaope users stealing their car radios and wheel caps just to get a fix.

They said operators started to target nyaope users and forced them to point out their drug dealers which were said to be foreign nationals. It was then that raids on businesses owned by foreign nationals began.

Aubrey Malinga, taxi owner and committee members at Boitekong Taxi Association, said issues of theft and taxi operators being robbed and attacked were not new. However, he blamed the attacks on a local group of gangsters known as the SVK. He said the group targeted taxi operators and robbed them of their money and anything valuable.

Owing to the attacks, two taxi operators had died and a taxi owner was admitted to hospital and was



One of the buildings which was set on fire in Rustenburg.

pital. He will be buried tomorrow.

Malinga said the other operator was attacked and murdered last November.

"Taxi owner Lucky Maulane, 44, is in hospital after he was attacked on Saturday," Malinga said.

Maulana's son, Oscar, said his father's attackers used stones to hit him and he was mostly hurt on the head and jaw. "My father is badly hurt, and at the moment he cannot walk. All his teeth have been taken out because his jaw is messed up," he said.

Oscar, 18, said his father was getting better.

He was now able to walk a bit.

Even so, Malinga said one of the reasons behind the unrest was that a 17-year-old girl had told taxi operators she had been raped by man named "Rasta".

It was because of the girl's claims that operators made their way to a house in Noord where the man was found.

Malinga said they seized four

"The police came and we left matters in their hands. Minutes later, the K9 police division came to the rank and asked what was happening. While in talks with them, members of the SAPS Public Order Policing started using teargas on us," he said.

Malinga said: "All hell broke loose when the community saw that the drug dealers who were supposed to be in jail were in fact walking free on the streets.

"It was after that discovery that community members got angry and went to buildings they knew operated as brothels and were believed to be drug dens," he said.

The unrest started at around 5pm on Wednesday and employees working at nearby businesses said they saw a group of angry people making their way to various buildings in the CBD.

Minutes later they heard windows breaking and then flames and clouds of smoke filled the sky.

However, some foreign nationals

An employee at the shop, Nandos Makanza, said the community burnt the wrong business. "I understand their concerns but we only deal with tyres here, nothing else. I don't know where I'm going to get money to feed my family now that the business which had put food on the table has been torched," he said. Buildings torched were mostly guesthouses owned by foreign nationals.

Brigadier Sabata Mokgwabone said six buildings had been torched, but no arrests had been made yet.

Rustenburg executive mayor Mpho Khunou said they were going to close all the brothels in Rustenburg. "We closed a number of brothels in Rustenburg east in November and we have planned to intensify the work focusing on the east and north and the central business district, particularly at the taxi rank."

Khunou vowed that from next week, they will be closing all brothels. "One of the things that these



A building on fire in Rustenburg on Wednesday night.

PICTURE: ANA



Police officers monitoring the Rustenburg CBD. Six buildings believed to be brothels and owned by drug dealers were burnt by angry community members.

PICTURES: OUPA MOKOENA/ANA

Khunou met with taxi association committees to find ways of working together with the municipality and the SAPS to find solutions to the problems. Mayoral spokesperson Andrew Seome said the committee agreed to work together with the municipality and members of the police to fight all the social ills in their communities.

He said they were committed to doing so peacefully, without breaking any laws.

The Minister of Police, Fikile Mbalula, condemned the people who took the law into their own hands and made threats that they would continue with the violence.

"No matter how justified people might think they are, taking the law into their own hands does not make them different to the people they accuse of being criminals. People must know we are a democratic state, with competent institutions that can resolve all concerns," Mbalula said.

He urged the police to root out acts of criminality in commun-



# Calm after brothels, drug dens set on fire

The Star 12/01/2015 Page 5 (SAPS)

## Rustenburg braces for more unrest as hitmen are called in

**VIRGILATTE GWANGWA**  
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**T**HINGS appeared to be calm in Rustenburg yesterday as police patrolled the area where unrest broke out on Wednesday and six buildings were torched. But foreign nationals feared that further violence may break out during the night and today.

While it was business as usual for those not looted and torched, foreign nationals remained tense after many had lost their livelihoods when their businesses were set alight. They were unsure what to expect next.

A high police presence remained in the streets, with officers patrolling the central business district where buildings had been destroyed. They also kept a close eye on the taxi rank.

However, there were still threats that *inkabi* (hitmen) from Eastern Cape and Joburg were expected to make their way to Rustenburg today to assist taxi drivers with "cleaning" the area of drug dealers.

This comes after Rustenburg came to a standstill on Wednesday afternoon when an angry mob set alight buildings that are believed to be drug dens and brothels.



**TORCHED:** One of the six buildings, believed to be brothels owned by drug dealers, which were set alight by local residents.

Members of the community said the unrest started after taxi operators decided they had had enough of nyaope users stealing their car radios and wheel caps so they could get their next fix.

They said operators started to target nyaope users and forced them to point out their drug dealers, which were said to be foreign nationals. It was alleged that it was then that the raids of businesses owned by foreign nationals began.

Aubrey Malinga, a taxi owner, and committee members of Boitekong Taxi Association, said issues of theft and taxi operators being robbed and attacked were not new.

He blamed the attacks on a local group of gangsters known as the SVK. He said the group targeted taxi oper-



**ON PATROL:** Police officers monitor the Rustenburg CBD where six buildings, believed to be brothels, owned by drug dealers, were burnt by angry community members.

ators and robbed them of their money and anything valuable. Due to the attacks, two taxi operators had died and a taxi owner had been admitted to hospital, where he was fighting for his life.

He said one of the operators from Sondela, Lebogang Motlhabane, 32, disappeared on December 15 and was found barely alive 12 days later in the bushes. He later died in hospital and will be buried tomorrow.

Malinga said the other operator was attacked and murdered in November. "Taxi owner Lucky Maulana, 44, is currently in hospital after he was attacked on Saturday," Malinga said.

Maulana's son Oscar said his father's attackers hit him with stones and he was mostly hurt on the head and jaw. "My father is badly hurt. He cannot walk and all his teeth have been taken out because his jaw is messed up," he said. Malinga said the reason behind the unrest was that a 17-year-old girl told operators she had been raped by a man named Rasta. It was due to the girl's claims that operators made their way to a house in Noord where the man was found. He said they seized four people with drugs in their possession. Among them was a police officer and two foreign nationals. "When we found them, we put them in an enclosed area where we normally put boxes at the taxi rank. The police

came and we left matters in their hands. Minutes later, the K9 police division came to the rank and asked what was happening. While in talks with them, members of the SAPS Public Order Policing started using teargas on us," he said.

Malinga added: "All hell broke loose when the community saw that the drug dealers, who were expected to be in jail, were in fact walking free on the streets.

"It was after that discovery that community members got angry and went to buildings they knew operated as brothels and were believed to be drug dens," he said.

The unrest started around 5pm on Wednesday, and employees at nearby businesses said they saw a group

of angry people making their way to various building in the CBD. Minutes later, they heard windows breaking and then flames and smoke filled the sky.

However, some foreign nationals whose businesses were burnt were adamant their workplaces were not run by druglords. Among buildings burnt was a tyre shop owned by a man from Uganda.

An employee at the shop, Nandos Makanza, said the community had burnt the wrong business.

"I understand their concerns but we only deal with tyres here, nothing else. Right now I don't know where I'm gonna get money to feed my family now that the business which had put food on the table has been torched," he said.

Buildings torched were mostly guest houses owned by foreign nationals.

Brigadier Sabata Mokgabone said six buildings had been torched but no arrests had been made.

Rustenburg executive mayor Mpho Khunou said they were going to close all the brothels in the city.

He said: "We closed a number of brothels in Rustenburg East in November and we have planned to intensify the work, focusing on the east and north, as well as the central business district, particularly at the taxi rank."

Minister of Police Fikile Mbalula condemned the people who decided to take the law into their own hands and the threat to continue doing so.

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TNA - 17/01/16 - P91 - National - Accutrat neg

## Mbalula slams violence

ELFAS TORERAI

POLICE Minister Fikile Mbalula condemned violent incidents in which a number of properties were set alight in ongoing chaos in Rustenburg.

Mbalula said at no point should people take the law into their own hands.

Several houses, some operating as guest houses, were torched on Wednesday afternoon in the Rustenburg CBD on allegations that they were drug and prostitution dens.

Residents complained that police had failed to act on a number of reports made about drugs that were destroying the moral fabric of society.

"No matter how justified people might think they are, taking the law into their own hands does not make them different to the people they accuse of being criminals," Mbalula said.

"People must know we are a democratic state with competent institutions that can resolve all concerns."

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# Calm in Ottoshoop after protests

ELFAS TORERAI

POLICE are still maintaining a huge presence in Ottoshoop near Mahikeng after violent protests rocked the area on Monday and Tuesday.

The situation now seems to have calmed down.

A total of 16 suspects aged between 18 and 37 were arrested and will be charged with public violence, malicious damage to property, arson and contravention of National Road Traffic Act, 1996.

North West police said an unconfirmed number of Ottoshoop residents embarked on a violent protest and in the process barricaded the R49 road between Mahikeng and Zeerust and also set alight a post office.

They pelted a police station and a house used to accommodate police officers with stones. The house, which is next to the police station, was also

partially burnt. The road was closed on Monday but reopened on Tuesday morning. Among other issues, residents demanded that the Mahikeng local municipality improved service in the area.

Residents have complained about water supply and other social amenities in their area for some time.

One woman was arrested in the skirmishes and was expected to appear in the Zeerust Magistrate's Court soon.

North West police spokesperson, Brig Sabata Mokgwabone said incidents of violence, destruction of property and anarchy would not be tolerated.

"Police management in North West condemned the acts of public violence that took place in Ottoshoop earlier this week, urging members of the community to refrain from damaging properties," he said.

"They also pelted a police station and a house with stones. This led to damage

to windowpanes of the buildings. After the barricading of the R49 with burning tyres and other objects, the road was temporarily closed," he said.

This led to traffic being diverted to other routes.

Provincial police commissioner, Lt-Gen Baile Motswenyane said members of the public should desist from destroying property and find other means to vent their frustrations.

She described as pure criminality, actions by members of the public who destroyed public property and vowed to clamp down on the culprits.

"We would like to appeal to members of the community to refrain from destroying properties as this is unlawful and cannot be tolerated.

"We also want to make it clear that no violence will be tolerated and the police will act against any person who commits crime," she said.

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TINA - 10/01/15 - Pg 7 - Nwps - Post Hubs

DAILY SUN - 12/01/17 - NWSARS - 09 6 - R5 Neo

## FIRE FURY AFTER RAID

### Guest houses up in smoke!

By ZANELE SITHOLE

RESIDENTS are furious after cops found a 17-year-old at a house believed to be a brothel on Wednesday.

The girl, who went missing on Monday, was found wrapped in a blanket with her mouth taped after allegedly being raped.

The house in Rustenburg North in North West was raided by a group of taxi drivers after Monday's shutdown of the town.

Accusing nyaope addicts of attacking them, drivers left residents stranded.

The girl's mum (42) and drivers went to raid houses believed to be brothels and drug dens.

The girl told her rescuers she spotted a cop in uniform there, saying he came to collect money from one of the drug dealers.

This sparked outrage and six guest houses were set alight in the CBD.

Three cellphones were destroyed when people used them to take pictures and *Daily Sun* photographer Rapula Mancai



Angry residents torched houses occupied by foreigners in Rustenburg on Wednesday.

Photo by Rapula Mancai

was told to put his camera away.

The mum claimed her daughter was forced into drugs and prostitution.

She said cops' failure to help her in the past when she wanted to report a drug den proved they work with drug dealers.

"I was given the runaround," she said.

"I went there four times, and

each time I was told they would get back to me but they never did."

Two foreigners, a local man believed to be a cop, and a woman were found at another house.

Commissioner Baile Motswenyane said a suspect was bust on Wednesday for the rape of the 17-year-old. A cop was bust for possession of drugs.

12 | 01 | 18 DCS & TM pg 6 DE Neg Semphete

## Six killed in a head-on collision near Potch

Obakeng Maje

Six people were killed and three others injured following a head-on collision on the N12 Highway, just 15 kilometres outside of Potchefstroom on Wednesday night.

Spokesperson for ER24 paramedics, Russell Meiring, said their paramedics alongside other services arrived on the scene shortly before midnight where a bakkie and light motor vehicle were found in the middle of the road.

Meiring said both vehicles were badly damaged in the collision. He said upon closer inspection, paramedics discovered six people lying in the light motor vehicle while three were found inside the bakkie. Paramedics assessed the patients in the light motor vehicle and found

that two men, a woman and two children, aged between three and four, had all sustained numerous injuries and showed no signs of life.

"Nothing could be done for them and they were later declared dead. A sixth patient from the light motor vehicle, a woman, was found to be in a critical condition. Paramedics treated the woman and provided her with advanced life support interventions," Meiring said.

He added that upon inspection of the bakkie, paramedics found three men inside. Meiring said two had sustained moderate injuries, while a third had sustained fatal injuries.

"Nothing could be done for the man and he was declared dead. Once paramedics had treated the three patients, the critically injured was airlifted by a private medical helicopter to Lenmed Randfontein for urgent treatment. The two other



One of the cars involved in an accident in the N12 outside Potchefstroom  
Photo supplied

patients were transported by ambulance to a nearby hospital.

"The exact details surrounding this incident are not yet known but local authorities were on the scene for further investigations," he said.

MEC for Community Safety and Transport Management, Dr Mokgantsang Mpho Motlhabane, said the province is still consolidating its holiday season road

accident figures.

"We had a situation on Sunday which really shocked all of us as a province where we lost seven people, while seven others were hospitalised. I believe that these accidents affected our statistics phenomenally. However, we have done our best under the circumstances," Motlhabane said.

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## Scholar transport ready for schools reopening

Lebogang Motlathedi

It is in place to kick off the new academic year with smooth scholar transport services.

This is an assurance by Head of Department of Community Safety and Transport Management, Bothale Mofokeng.

Mofokeng said this after meeting newly appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of North West Transport Investment (NTI), Bukeka Mhlotshane, and CEO of Learner Transport, Gideon Wessie, in Rustenburg last week.

"The meeting was beneficial to both parties. We are ready for the schools reopening and we can assure everyone that learners will be ferried to their various schools on time and safely, Mo-

fokeng said.

The HoD said the meeting was convened to discuss and come up with innovative strategies of improving scholar transport services as well as to address challenges experienced last year.

Mofokeng was upbeat about the outcomes of the meeting and plans going ahead.

"Our department together with the Department of Education and Sport Development and the NTI will run a thorough inspection on scholar transport before the school reopening to ensure that vehicles used to ferry learners are road-worthy and have valid permits," said Mofokeng.

Schools are scheduled to reopen next Wednesday 17 January for the 2018 academic year.



HoD of Community Safety and Transport Management Bothale Mofokeng with new CEO of NTI Bukeka Mhlotshane and Gideon Wessie of Learner Transport after their meeting last week



# Unemployed youth start Road Traffic Management training

**Obakeng Maje**

**T**hey left their homes in all parts of Bokone Bophirima for a 12-month month training and upon their return, these young people could be tough traffic officers on our roads.

MEC for Community Safety and Transport Management, Dr Mpho Motlhabane, has wished well to 20 unemployed youth who are about to start a Road Traffic Management Training Learnership. The learnership programme takes a full year and new recruits are likely to start work as soon as they return.

Motlhabane encouraged the 20 young men and women to work hard.

"Those who were elected to embark on a Road Traffic Management training course must consider themselves lucky. We have received thousands of applications and this is a lifetime opportunity that they must never let go. These unemployed youth will commence their Road Traffic Management Learnership Programme at the Traffic Training College in Mpumalanga.

"The new recruits are all below 35 years and were recruited from all the four districts of the province. They were selected with an objective of addressing the shortage of traffic officers in the province. The learners will engage in a theoretical and practical training in different traffic man-

agement levels during the duration of the programme," he said.

Motlhabane added that the recruitment followed the department's commitment to intensify traffic law enforcement operations and increase the visibility of traffic officers to reduce road accidents and fatalities on all major roads of the province. He said another cohort of 20 unemployed youth would be leaving on 22 January 2018 to undergo training in Pretoria.

"We are doing this because we have realised the importance of traffic visibility on our roads. When the budget allows us, we will continue to train more traffic officers. The challenge that we are still having is the absence of a Traffic Training College in the province. However, as government, we are working with the private sector to establish our own college.

"Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) is busy trying to establish a training college that will cater for the entire country too. The department is also at an advanced stage in terms of securing a private partner who will develop and build the college within the province. We hope that we will satisfy supply chain processes through the permission of Treasury," Motlhabane said.

Meanwhile, a 33 year-old man appeared briefly at Moloopo Magistrate's Court in Mahikeng on charges of fraud for allegedly swindling money from unsuspecting people promising them jobs as traffic officers. Oscar Mompoti Mmutlwanane was



**The 20 new traffic management recruits who left for Mpumalanga for a 12-month training**

Picture supplied by Department of Community Safety and Transport Management

allegedly demanding R3000, from each person.

He was arrested on Monday at Magogoe village outside Mahikeng after police intensified their investigations. Mmutlwanane was remanded in custody until 18 January when he will appear again for a formal bail application.

"We want to appeal to the entire society that we understand the high rate of unemployment, especially among the youth. However, we would like to caution

them that they must not be that desperate to be lured by criminals. These are fraudsters who are taking advantage of our youth and our society at large.

"We want to indicate that as government and the department we condemn the act actuated by these criminals. We also want to commend the police for the swift arrest and encourage the society to work together with the police to ensure that we curb this criminal behaviour," Motlhabane said.

# Mass funeral for crash victims

THYS MOKGWAETSE

SEVEN family members from Jouberton, who died in a horrific crash near Lichtenburg on Sunday, will be buried in a mass funeral tomorrow.

The Setlhabi and Mvala families said they were still shocked and saddened by the accident that killed seven and left seven others injured.

The injured were admitted to the General Delarey Hospital in Lichtenburg.

The accident happened on the R503 Road between Mahikeng and Lichtenburg after the driver of a minibus taxi the family was travelling in lost control after hitting a honey badger 10km before Lichtenburg.

The vehicle was returning to Klerksdorp from Mahikeng where the passengers had attended a family gathering in the provincial capital.

Seven female passengers and an 11-year-old girl were certified dead at the scene by paramedics.

The mass funeral will be held tomorrow at Brazil Stadium in Jouberton near Klerksdorp. The victims are Karabo Setlhabi, nine, Nonhlanhla Mvala, five, Nonceba Mgugulo, 13, Lebogang Setlhabi, 15, Ntombizanele Mvala, 17, Boingotlo Setlhabi, 18 and Julia Mvala-Setlhabi, 39, all from Jouberton.

Julia's children are Karabo, Lebogang and Boingotlo.

The victim's uncle, Isaiah Mvala, 51, who also lost his daughter, Nonceba, said one-year-old survivor Quinton Senatle was not injured in the accident.

Quinton's mother, Mathapelo Senatle, 22, has been discharged from hospital.

The grieving uncle, Mvala, said the family was on its way back home when they were involved in the accident.

"We are so devastated by this acci-



**TRAGEDY:** Seven family members were killed in a minibus accident.

dent and the worst part of it is that I also lost my daughter and we lost a large number of our family members," Mvala said.

"We are hurt because we were not expecting something like this.

"We are happy for the support that we are still receiving from the community and also the intervention of the government," he said.

Community safety and transport management MEC Mpho Motlhabane expressed sadness and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

"Our heartfelt condolences to the families of the bereaved and we also wish a speedy recovery to those injured and admitted here in the hospital," Motlhabane said.

"We hope that you will gain strength and overcome this unfortunate tragedy.

"It's unbelievable that when we thought we had survived the rough season of terrible accidents we now get to experience this tragedy. This is painful and unbelievable."

Traffic is anticipated to pick up on main roads of the province at the weekend as most people are expected to drive back to work including the official opening of schools.

Motlhabane called for restraint on the roads to avoid unnecessary loss of life.

"The road is a space to share, therefore we need to exercise patience and cooperate with each other for all of us to reach our destinations safely.

"Let us all take responsibility for road safety to save our lives and reduce the high rate of accidents," Motlhabane said.

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