

By CHRISTOPHER MOAGI  
**IN JULY Police Minister  
Fikile Mbalula came  
under fire for promising  
to send amaberete back  
into the townships.**

*But Mbalula has stuck to  
his guns.*

**AMABERETE WILL  
SOON BE BACK ON THE  
STREETS.**

Today, Mbalula and  
Lieutenant-General Gary  
Kruser will relaunch the  
tactical response

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

# Minister gives the nod to amaberete

MANIKENI MAIL 29/9/17 SAPS (NATIONAL) PUS Pg2

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

and tracking teams, known as amaberete, in Tshwane.

Mbalula's spokesman, Vuyo Mhaga, said amaberete were being relaunched to deal with crimes like hijacking and high risk incidents.

The unit was established by former police commissioner Bheki Cele in 2011, with some apparent success, but videos also emerged of them slapping and kicking customers in taverns and forcing taxi drivers to do push-ups on the side of the road.

Mbalula first hinted amaberete could be making a comeback when he addressed marchers to the Springs Police Station in Ekurhuleni in July.

The marchers had taken to the street to voice their worries about crimes against women and children in the area.

At the time, Mbalula said: "I will bring back the unit."

"I will send the tracing unit after those who were arrested and released."

At the time, South African Policing Unit general secretary Oscar Skommere said the unit was not the right one to deal with

the wave of violent crimes against women and children, or other crimes.

"We know the tactical response and tracking teams are skop en donner. What are you going to do when a person is already dead?" Skommere asked.

The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union said it was fully behind Mbalula's decision to send the unit back into the townships. Its spokesman, Richard Mamabolo, said the unit was misplaced in the police and doing things it was not

meant to do.

He said the unit must be used to deal with kidnapping, cash-in-transit robberies and the use of illegal firearms.

Mhaga said that members of the response and tracking teams had been sent for refresher courses and skills improvement programmes to ensure a secure environment for South Africans.

He said police management had committed themselves to improving service delivery through initiatives to combat crime, improve reaction time and to make sure those responsible for high risk incidents were caught.

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