

Young members of the SAPS at the Police Academy in Pretoria West where they were addressed by Police Minister Fikile Mbalula. PICTURE: OUPA MOKOENA

30/06/17 PRETORIA HEWOS Pg 2 Nationed SAPS pos

SAPS First Youth Conference staged

MATLHATSI DIBAKWANE

YOUR duty and responsibility, in whatever task you are assigned to, is to defend freedom. This was the message from Police Minister Fikile Mbalula to 1 500 young police officers yesterday.

Mbalula was addressing young men and women at the SAPS First Youth Conference.

He told the under 35s that young people were the ones who should be responsible for change, be full of ideas and make mistakes to be corrected.

He said, as young police officers, they had to understand what freedom was and had to be grateful for the opportunity given to them.

Mbalula told them that during the apartheid days black people who trained at the college were seen as sell-outs.

He further spoke on abuse and said women should not be turned away when reporting abuse, and criminals should be dealt with in a harsh manner.

"We must not chase women away, we are sick of men who abuse and we must unsettle criminals," he said.

He told the young law enforcement officers that the police service was a big organisation and they had the honour of serving in it. "We are running a big organisation and that is where you have landed."

Acting national police commissioner Lieutenant General Lesetja Mothiba said the young officers had to be assisted in finding their place in the organisation, and they needed to be groomed to help people in the community.

Mothiba emphasised the love of one's country and people.

"If you do not love your coun-



Police Minister Fikile Mbalula speaks at the SAPS First Youth Conference in Pretoria. PICTURE: JACQUES NAUDE

try, you do not love your people," Mothiba said.

Brigadier Nikiwe Hloane, one of the speakers, urged the young

officers to take their job seriously because they took an oath.

"This uniform is a calling not a job," said Hloane. As police officers, they were the last hope for many people, who often went to police stations after other avenues had failed, she said.

"You must always have answers because you are the last hope."

She motivated them to study, pray, do physical fitness and socialise, and told them to bring back the dignity in the SAPS.

Young officer Captain Thembu Gwe, 35, said: "This is a great initiative by the SAPS for young people, this is a platform for us to be empowered to come up with strategic views to ensure we protect our country."

"When we joined, we said we are here to protect and serve and now this a platform for us to enhance our commitment," she said.

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Young officers told to defend freedom

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