



Media Statement

Friday 11 September 2015

MEC Molapisi condemns violent protests in Potch and Ventersdorp

Community Safety and Transport Management MEC Gaoage Molapisi strongly condemns violent actions of protesters in Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp. This follows the blocking of roads with burning tyres and other objects by the protesters who are against the merging of the Tlokwe Local Municipality and the Ventersdorp Local Municipality.

Molapisi said destroying of public and private property is criminality and those found responsible for this would be put behind bars.

"South Africa is a democratic country where people have rights, and these rights are enshrined in the Constitution. People have the right to gather and march but their rights are not above any other rights. There is no right in the constitution that grants anyone a permission to burn and destroy essential amenities like schools, libraries, police stations, or government buildings. They cannot pick and chose which rights suites them. If you transgress the Constitution you must face the full might of the law," said Molapisi.

He said when the protesters applied for the march, they said it was going to be a peaceful march and the leaders will control the march assisted by the marshals and more often that does not become the case.

"What happened in Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp is a case in point. As government we are not going to fold our arms and say it is happening. We are going to apply the law and police must do their work without exceptions and those responsible must be arrested and prosecuted. Many times the suspects are given granted free bail or warning and this does not deter them from repeating the crime. All these acts of hooliganisms and crime must be investigated; our courts must set an example. Those who have burned the municipal building in Ventersdorp are in serious trouble as they should be charged with arson and the charge for arson is a serious one. Communities and councillors must assist the police with giving information because they know and have seen the perpetrators. We must all condemn these barbaric acts because they derail progress and development. I want to see people arrested and these must not take long," he said. The MEC further appealed to the general public not to engage in unlawful acts.

Members of the public experiencing any possible act of criminality are advised to contact the Departmental Call Centre on this number: [0800 204 992](tel:0800204992).

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