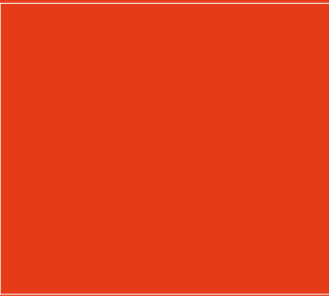


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'ANC' GANG ATTACK OWN MP

- ANC MP accuses REC leaders of assault
- ANC REC leaders form private organisation
- Assault case of ANCYL leader struck off the roll



Member of Parliament, Sheila Makhubela

BOSCHFONTEIN: *A Member of Parliament in the National Assembly is the latest victim of the political hooliganism that is taking place in Nkomazi. Shelly Makhubela who is also a member of the African National Congress Youth League's National Executive Committee (ANCYL NEC) told Ziwaphi that she was assaulted by among others, a member of the ANC's Regional Executive Committee (REC).*

"They accused me of being against the

agenda of certain senior comrades in the African National Congress," said Makhubela.

Makhubela told Ziwaphi that she had been delivering a political input when an ANC REC member burst into the hall and asked her what she was doing in his branch. According to sources, the REC member does not qualify to be a member of the ANCYL because he is above the required age to be called a youth, and he is also not a member of the ANCYL.

While still puzzled by this act, Makhubela says that the REC member took a stack of documents that she had been reading from and threw them on her face, and thereafter started assaulting her and pulling her and dragging her clothes in full view of participants at the workshop. Two other youths, whose names are also known to Ziwaphi, also joined in the assault.

When they momentarily stopped assaulting her, she managed to flee the

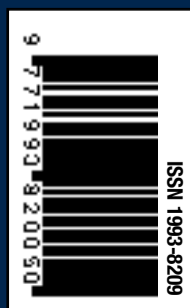
hall and tried to call the police, but was unsuccessful. She eventually managed to get the Tonga police through the assistance of the station commissioner of the Mbusuzi police station, it however, turned out that they also could not go to the scene of the crime because they did not have any vehicles.

While she was trying to drive off from the premises, other members of the ANC, who included a leading member

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2010 SOPA EXPECTATIONS

■ **COMRADE SPIKIRI's** review and preview



**SOCIAL, CULTURE
AND ARTS**

• **BACK PAGE**



Comrade Phinda Mzala is back



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To be or not to be a banana

Is Mpumalanga a "banana province"?

The anonymous people who have written letters to President Jacob Zuma to recall Premier David "DD" Mabuza for creating a banana province, should be praised at least for one thing – CREATIVITY. They invented a new phrase – banana province. They may have plagiarised a part of the phrase from the "banana republic" phrase – a derogatory term "used to refer to a country that is politically unstable, dependent on limited agriculture (e.g. bananas), and ruled by a small, self-elected, wealthy, and corrupt clique. The term was originally invented as a very direct reference to a "servile dictatorship" which abetted (or directly supported in return for kickbacks) the exploitation of large-scale plantation agriculture (usually banana cultivation)."

In an effort to determine if it is justifiable to label Mpumalanga a banana province we make a comparison between the characteristics of a banana republic and what is happening in Mpumalanga. Since this may not be a scientific measure, but one



that is based on reports and media articles.

Political stability: We are probably the most politically unstable province, characterised by violent so-called service delivery protests. ANC leaders, including MPLs have been accused of brandishing weapons in ANC meetings. There is a perpetual power struggle. The Premier's supporters are assaulting Members of the Youth League and Parliamentarians. **VERDICT: Banana.**

Leadership by a self-elected clique: (Election) – Mabuza defeated Lassy Chiwayo fair and square. **VERDICT: No Banana.**

Leadership by the rich: Those who have connections to the politicians are filthy rich and the masses have no access to clean water. **VERDICT: Banana.**

Corruption: Premier Mabuza

appointed commissions of enquiry into corruption in the departments of Education and Culture, Sports and Recreation. Suspension of former HOD for Public Works; SCOPA revelations. Adoption of Corruption strategy by the Cabinet **VERDICT: No banana.** BUT until the Premier allows the Hawks and Assets Forfeiture Unit to camp in the province elements of the banana will always be there.

Kickbacks: Will the Premier and the Presidency please deny or admit that he paid R400 000 to buy the Premiership from Inkandla? **VERDICT: Half a banana.**

It appears that we have more traces of banana, but it would be unfair to suggest that Mabuza created the traces of banana, which he has mostly inherited from his predecessors.

In a year's time, however, he will be deemed equally guilty of creating the banana, unless he reverses the whole situation by calling the scorpions to clean up and making peace with his own comrades that up to now having behaving like his opponents because he, too, treats them as such.

A banana Hit List, banana journalism and all the banana allegations

This past week was probably the most exciting, at least from the media people's point of view. A list of complaints was, reportedly sent to President Jacob Zuma requesting Premier David Dabede Mabuza to be recalled, accusing him of turning Mpumalanga into a banana province.

This was followed by what was probably the biggest coverage Mpumalanga has ever received in the Sunday Times since the so-called Mamparalanga days.

His spin doctors quickly moved into gear to formulate what was probably their most impressive media release yet. I must say that Mabutho Sithole has matured since the days of his triumphant cowboy-like "Mabutho Has Arrived" media statement which announced his appointment.

Mabuza's spin doctors' ink had hardly dried, when the elusive "Hit List" finally emerged – almost two years after it was drawn! Remember – it was drawn before Jimmy Mohlala was murdered, technically when he blew the whistle against Jacob Dladla, or at least after the appointment of Chiwayo in 2008.

Last week, Ziwaphi broke the news

that the MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Sibongile Manana, had ordered an investigation into the alleged hit list.

If there were any advice that we can give to the police is IGNORE the list and hunt the person who faxed it, arrest and charge him.

Who is this person trying to fool? The person must have taken the banana story to new heights. He/she surely believes that we are indeed a banana province, with banana leaders, banana journalists and banana newspapers.

Those who authored the hit list must be having the strongest sangomas who knew as far back as 2008 that Mpumalanga based Sowetan journalist, Alfred Moselakgomo would one day write scandals against Premier Mabuza or that HOD for Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs David Mahlobo who only joined the provincial government from the national Department of Water Affairs in September last year would be coming to the province.

Poor Moselakgomo was not even warned that his name would be published in the media as one of

the people on the "hit list". We can only hope that he has not created himself enough enemies who would kill him because the motive for his killing already exists.

What can be concluded is that somebody, probably the hit-man, or his associates are deliberately spreading lies to mislead the police investigation.

But can someone please ask Mzilikazi Afrika to shut-up until he knows what he is talking about? The chap is playing a very dangerous game. He must distinguish between the messenger and the message. He seems to be gradually blurring the line.

And can SANCO's Makamu please avoid the radio for a while, because his efforts to link Mathews Phosa to all the wrong things that are happening in Mpumalanga through the media may land him in trouble.

He may end u with a massive lawsuit.

PS: At the time of going to press, Ziwaphi got information that Phosa was suing Raymond Makamo for R1million.

His organisation, SANCO also distanced itself from his statements.

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HOOLOGANS ASSAULT ANC MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

of the Nkomazi Local Municipality and a respected local businessman allegedly tried to block her route with their cars, but she maneuvered her way out, but they continued to hurl insults at her.

“They said they did not care even if I were a Member of Parliament. They boasted that they would deal with those who are going to youth league structures without their approval. They said that I must count my days because five years would soon be over and that they would ensure that I do not get elected into the NEC and that I would no longer be a Member of Parliament,” she said.

According to Makhubela, those who were hurling insults at her included two councillors of the Nkomazi Local Municipality and a leading businessman in Nkomazi. Nkomazi Local Municipality spokesperson, Cyril Repinga, however, refused to be drawn into the controversy.

“It is inappropriate to link the activities of individual councillors to the municipality unless they are on an official programme by the municipality,” he said.

Makhubela eventually opened a case of assault at Tonga Police Station, where she was told that the docket would be transferred to Schoemansdal Police Station as the incident took place in an area which was outside their jurisdiction. Indeed a day later, she called Schoemansdal Police Station she got confirmation that they that they had received the docket.

Spokesperson for the police in Schoemansdal, Constable Qwabe confirmed that a case has been opened CASE No 13/02/2010. She said that police have already taken statements from two suspects and that they are still looking for another suspect who resides in Nelspruit.

“Once we have concluded our investigations, we will send the case to the prosecutor for a decision because this is a political case,” she said.

Makhubela believes that her assailants do not want the young people in Nkomazi to be politically conscious because it would be difficult for them to manipulate them into doing things which are not in line with the principles of the ANC.

“They claim that I am against the agenda of certain comrades, but they can’t articulate what that agenda is. The comrades that they are referring to are known to me as leaders of the ANC and I am not aware of any other agenda except that of the ANC. What is at stake when we



ANCYL Secretary General Vuyiswa Tulelo

organize political education for the ANCYL?” she asked.

“They are not young people. The ANCYL is not for old people, but it is the school of politics for young people,” said Makhubela.

Makhubela’s case is the third known to Ziwaphi of a member of the ANCYL to have been assaulted in Nkomazi. In 2009 Provincial Executive Committee member, Hamzer Ngwenya, was assaulted by at least one of the people who are implicated in the assault of Makhubela.

On the same date that Makhubela was assaulted, another outspoken leader of the ANCYL, Regional Executive Committee member, Gary Nevari was also assaulted when he was addressing another gathering of the ANC Youth League in Nkomazi. He also reported the matter to the Tonga Police Station. The case number was given as 41/2/2010.

Police Spokesperson in Tonga, Mzwandile Nyambi confirmed during a telephone interview that a suspect was briefly arrested, but the local magistrate struck the case off the roll when the suspect who had been arrested could not be linked to the crime.

Nyambi said that the police investigation would continue the other suspects, who cannot be named, are still continuing.

Members of the community told Ziwaphi that political activity around Nkomazi is no longer possible unless you have the approval of a gang calling itself Isikhonyane (SiSwati name for locust plague). Their slogan is, “We Sweep Everything”.

The gang is led by a member of the Regional Executive Committee of the ANC, who travel around Quantum mini buses.

“They dress expensive, drink



ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe wants answers



ASSAULTED: Member of Parliament, Sheila Makhubela

expensive and often come to meetings very drunk, and behave like a rented crowd in events by singing the names of certain ANC leaders that they have been told to support. They do not engage politically,” said a community member who chose to remain anonymous.

The REC member who leads the gang is a well-known former member of the National Party, and ANC activists in Nkomazi believe that this member was not debriefed after joining the ANC that he can no longer use the same tactics that they were taught in the National Party.

Last week the gang held a gathering at KaMhluswha Community Hall, where they planned to prevent the community of Block B in Nkomazi from participating in a community march against the non-provision of water services. The meeting was attended by leading members of the Regional Executive Committee of the ANC.

Regional Secretary of the ANC in Ehlanzeni, Pat Ngomane, told Ziwaphi in a telephone interview that he was unaware of people who had been assaulted in Nkomazi, but



Paul Mbenyane distanced the ANC from the assaults



ANCYL Provincial Treasurer Hamzer Ngwenya

referred all the enquiries to Paul Mbenyane, the Spokesperson of the ANC in Mpumalanga Province. Mbenyane denied knowledge of a Skhonyane, but condemned the activities of the structure.

“The ANC cannot have such a structure and we distance ourselves from the activities of the individuals concerned,” he said, adding that the constitutional structures of the movement are well-known, and no member of the ANC can establish private structures.

SACP Provincial Chairperson, Jabulani Mathabe, told Ziwaphi that the activities that are taking place in Nkomazi are not unique to Mpumalanga and that they are a national phenomenon. He said that in any society where there s poverty, activities such as patronage and factionalism will always be predominant.

“We are sitting with a serious problem of poverty and unemployment and anyone who can provide jobs and tenders to young people would be able to manipulate them into doing things that are against the revolution.”

Siyathemba protesters show no sign of backing down

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

BALFOUR

Residents of Siyathemba township near Balfour in Mpumalanga have threatened to make the municipality of Dipaliseng ungovernable until the area is re-demarcated so that it returns to Gauteng.

On Tuesday, 22 people who were arrested on Monday for public violence, theft and arson after they burnt a municipal office and looted shops belonging to foreign nationals were unable to appear in court as renewed protests began at the local stadium.

“(Residents) are burning tyres and blockading every road in the township. About 60 of our members are in the area trying to calm the situation,” said Spokesperson of the Balfour police station, Sergeant Sam Tshabalala.

He said the case against the 22 suspects had been rescheduled for Wednesday.

The protesters are accusing the local municipality of poor service delivery.

They also accuse the Burnstone gold mine of failing to keep their promise to ensure that 50% of their employees were locals.

“We demand the resignation of all the councillors in the municipality. The first to go must be the mayor and the municipal manager, they have failed us. We also demand the immediate re-demarcation of Balfour to Gauteng because Mpumalanga sucks when it comes to service delivery. You just have to look at what was happening last year to know what I am saying,” said a protest leader, Herbert Zitha, on Tuesday.

Zitha said Burnstone mine would also be forced to close its operations if they failed to employ more people from Siyathemba.

“We want this mine to remain true to the employment policy that they promised us when came here two years ago. More than 50% of locals are unemployed and the mine has instead employed people from other provinces,” he said.

Spokesperson of the Balfour police station, Sergeant Sam Tshabalala, said that matters had grown more tense by Tuesday as people started to regroup at the local stadium.

Municipal spokesperson, Mahlalefi Lebotha said the community was not protesting about service delivery, but about the mine.

“You know, the most unfortunate part is that when this thing started on Sunday, it was about the mine and its employment policy, but now that the media is asking questions, they have made it about poor service delivery,” said Lebotha on Tuesday.

He said the municipality will be meeting with officials from the provincial department of co-operative governance and traditional affairs on Tuesday to try and find a solution to the matter.

Burnstone mine spokesperson Tsolo Serunye said the mine would release a statement on the matter later on Tuesday.

In June last year, more than 100 people

were arrested in the same township for public violence during week-long service delivery protests.

Service delivery protests broke out in five Mpumalanga municipalities last year. Provincial Premier David Mabuza blamed the protests on a lack of meaningful public participation and communication in matters that affect communities.

“What we have realised is that, as government, we continue to take decisions on behalf of the people. We are basically doing things for them and not with them” said Mabuza at the time.

On Tuesday, Mabuza’s spokesperson, Mabutho Sithole, said the Premier had deployed co-operative governance officials including MEC Norman Mokoena, to Balfour to address the matter.

“We are still requesting people to refrain from damaging government property. Communication is the solution,” said Sithole.

Pupils without scholar transport since July last year

BY ERIC MASHABA

NELSPRUIT

Pupils at an Mpumalanga primary school have been without scholar transport since July last year.

A new bus operator has yet to be appointed to ferry children to and from Boschfontein primary school in Mashishing (formerly Lydenburg).

“Premier David Mabuza shifted the responsibility to the department of public works, roads and transport as the department of education was not equipped to deal with the problem,” said provincial leader of the Democratic Alliance (DA), Anthony Benadie.

He said the department of roads and transport had also failed to address the matter, however.

He said the department issued a tender for scholar transport in December, but

gave interested parties less than two weeks to submit their documents.

“When they received complaints about the short notice, they cancelled the tender altogether and, to date, have not issued another tender,” he said.

Public works, roads and transport spokesperson, David Nkambule, confirmed that a service provider had still not been appointed for the operation at Mashishing.

He said the process was being hampered by the investigation into province-wide scholar transport irregularities.

He said Mpumalanga premier David Mabuza appointed a commission of inquiry last year to investigate multi-million Rand fraud in the scholar transport system after an initial investigation led to no arrests.

Private attorney Hettie Groenewald is chairing the inquiry into the troubled scholar transport system. Costs for the

programme escalated from R8,2 million in 2001, to a staggering R176,9 million in 2006, a 2 055% increase.

It is not clear when the report of the findings of the commission will be released.

In the mean time, he said a service provider was finalising the verification of scholar transport routes across the province.

“Their reports will assist the department to develop specifications for a new tender,” he explained.

Nkambule advised parents and pupils at Boschfontein to continue using private transport until the verification process is complete and a new operator appointed.

It is costing the parents of pupils who live in Marambane township outside Mashishing R250 per child per month to use private transport, which includes catching rides on the back of bakkies.

The Boschfontein primary pupils have

been unable to catch a bus to school since the Green Forest bus company failed to return when schools reopened after the winter holidays in July last year.

Company owner Emma Mahlangu stopped the operation when her contract expired.

“She stopped operations after her contract expired in July. She no longer wants any involvement in this system due to infighting between members of the Black Bus Owners Association,” said a relative, Wanda Xaba, on her behalf on Tuesday.

Chairman for the Black Bus Owners’ Association, Markos Nkosi, said the department does not care about the pupils at Mashishing.

“These pupils are being transported by unroadworthy bakkies and we, as the bus operators in the province, are against this. The bakkies are not safe and the pupil’s lives are at risk,” he said.

GANG ATTACKS ANC MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

FROM PAGE 3

It’s very unfortunate that people would take advantage of challenges of poverty and unemployment among the youth to pursue their personal agendas. That is why the South African Communist Party has started a campaign against corruption,” Mathabe said.

Meanwhile, Ziwaphi has established that the General Secretary of the ANCYL, Vuyiswa Tulelo has Makhubela’s assault to the ANC Secretary General, Gwede Mantashe. Makhubela confirmed to Ziwaphi that she has submitted the report. Ziwaphi has also learnt that the ANCYL’s National Working Committee is

expected to discuss the matter and pronounce itself afterwards.

ANCYL Provincial Secretary, Isaac Mahlangu, confirmed that they did receive a report on Makhubela’s assault, but that the manner in which they have received makes it impossible for the organisation to take any action at this stage.

“The matter of Sheila has been brought to our attention; however, the report has been copied to us. The main recipient is the Secretary General of the ANC, (Gwede Mantashe), so we cannot undermine those channels. Whatever direction shall be given from that level, we will comply with,” said Mahlangu.

Before becoming an MP last year, Makhubela was employed at Statistics SA, something that her assailants were clearly unhappy about. Some of them are dependent on government tenders and in the main are not only uneducated, but they also despise educated people.

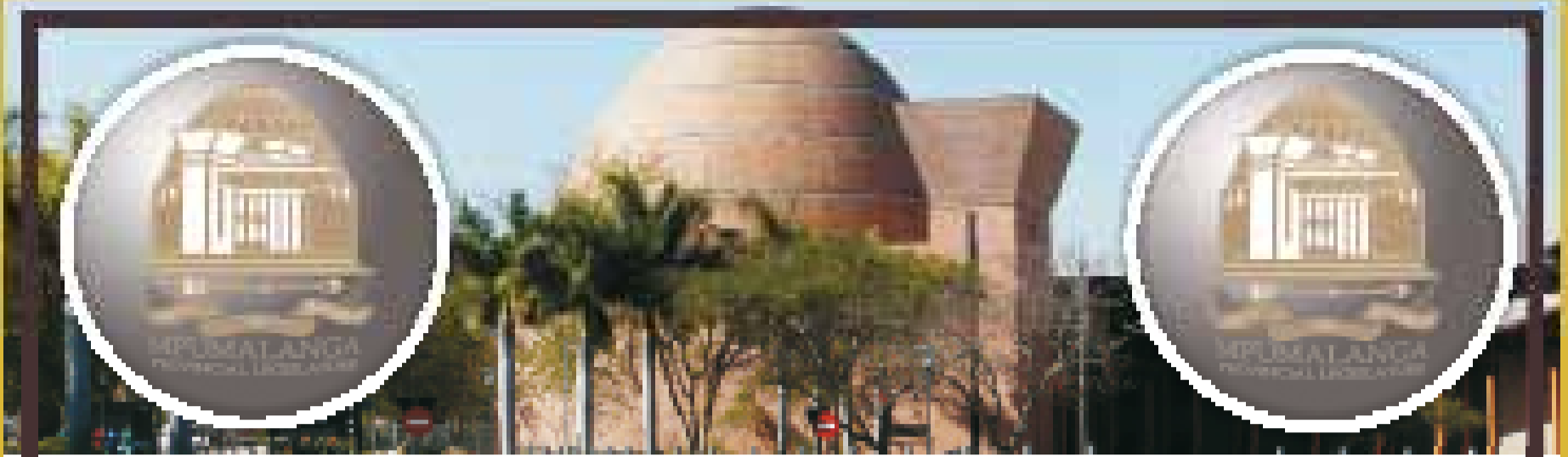
“Ucabanga kutsi kufundza kutokusita? Lelive alifuni bantfu labafundzile,” Loosely translated, “You think that education will help you? This country does not require educated people,” said one of her assailants.

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MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

State of the Province Address 2010

**The Premier of Mpumalanga Province,
Hon DD Mabuza will officially open the second session of
the fourth Mpumalanga Legislature.**

Date	10 February 2010
Time	08:00
Venue	Meritsia, Government Complex Building No. 14

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Nearly 1 000 cases of mutilated corpses reported to THO in 2009

BY THABISILE KHOZA

NELSPRUIT

Nearly 1 000 families nationwide reported that the corpses of their dead relatives had been harvested for muthi before burial last year.

The cases of missing body parts were reported to the Traditional Healers Organisation (THO), but there is no clear record as to whether police charged or arrested anyone.

"About 901 bodies had some parts missing, especially breasts and genitals," said national coordinator of the THO, Phephisile Maseko, on Monday. "The biggest question is, who are these people who purchase the parts? And, if we expose them, what systems are there to protect us?"

She expressed concern that in "most cases", police were involved in protecting those, often wealthy businessmen, who buy human body parts in the belief that it will boost their businesses.

Maseko said the elderly and children were particularly vulnerable to muthi killings.

"People believe that if you use the genitals or hands of an old person or a child for muthi, your business will make lots of money, but it's not true," she said.

She said traditional healers who used body parts to make muthi were not true healers, but "heartless witches".

"How could a healer use body parts or remove somebody's body parts while

the person is still alive? That means you are a witch, not a healer," she said. "I am worried that our name is being used in the wrong way and our profession is at stake because every time such cases happen, people look at us (as if we're to blame). We want to protect our profession," she said.

She said the issue was raised at a meeting about ritual murders with the Minister for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, Noluthando Mayende-Sibiya, in Pretoria last week.

Maseko said THO is ready to help the government try stop muthi murders and expose the perpetrators of the trade in human body parts.

She said most of the cases in which corpses were harvested for body part, or 350 cases, were in Limpopo, followed by Mpumalanga where 210 cadavers had been mutilated.

"(Muthi murders) are mostly happening in provinces that have international borders because the parts are being transported to neighbouring countries," Maseko said.

At the meeting last week, Minister Mayende-Sibiya said in a statement that while African medicine was part of South Africa's culture, this did not excuse or justify the killing of a human being to heal a person.

"We cannot be a country that lives in fear that a child, woman or man has been killed for such purposes. We have to root out this evil practice," Mayende-Sibiya said.

She said an indaba would be held in March to address muthi killings. She said government would gather all available data to better understand the prevalence, patterns and trends of the cases.

"We have to ensure that these cases are recorded correctly and ensure that our people are aware of this problem and they assist us and the law enforcement agencies to address this problem."

Muthi cases on trial in Mpumalanga

BY THABISILE KHOZA

Six people are scheduled to appear in the Tonga Magistrate's Court near the Mozambican border in Mpumalanga on February 17 in connection with a case in which a six-year-old girl was gutted for muthi.

The suspects, Jeremiah Ngwenya (26) and Judas Mandlazi (21), Stella Zulu (45), Sifiso Vilakazi (21) and Thabile Mnisi (29) of Masibekela village, and John Ndlovu (47) of Sibange village, are charged with murder. They have not been asked to plead since their arrest in April last year.

Ndlovu is out on bail, while the other five are still in custody.

According to police evidence, the little girl Dimakatso Shabangu was cut open for her body parts while still alive

on April 21. Her gutted body was then flung into the Inkomazi River where it was found on April 26, 2009.

Zulu, Vilakazi and Ngwenya admitted in statements read out in court on May 19 that they were part of a muthi syndicate and were paid R500 for every child they brought in alive.

They stated that Shabangu was still alive when her body parts were removed and that one of the suspects used a knife to slice open her vagina and used his hands to remove her innards. They had no idea what happened to her body parts afterwards.

Shabangu disappeared after her mother, Goodness Mahlalela (25), left her in Zulu's care. Zulu was her neighbour and often did baby-sitting for her.

In a separate incident, a man and woman accused of kidnapping a 16-month-old girl will also appear in the Tonga Magistrate's Court on February 17.

Elliot Chauke (25), of Ntunda village near the Swaziland border and his co-accused, Elizabeth Sibitane (47), were arrested on September 21, 2009 after Chauke confess to police that he had kidnapped 16-month-old Wendy Sandleni and sold her (Or her body parts?) to a neighbour for R1 000.

He in turn fingered Sibitane, saying she had also promised him a further R5 000 to not say anything about the disappearance of the baby.

Sandleni went missing on September 12 while playing with her brother and his friends outside their home in Tongaview.

Mpumalanga municipal manager suspended

BY FRANCE NYAKA

KWAGGAFONTEIN

The days are numbered for corrupt officials in Thembisile Hani Local Municipality in Kwaggafontein, Mpumalanga, after their municipal manager was suspended on Monday.

William Kosabo Mahlangu was suspended with full pay during the year's first sitting of the council for his alleged involvement in corruption, and incompetence.

The chairperson of the council's investigating committee, Thami Kubheka, confirmed that Mahlangu had been suspended for his involvement in corrupt activities and incompetency.

"He has been suspended with full pay for undermining the municipal authority and being incompetent. He defrauded the municipality of R2.6-million for a fan parks project without the council's authority. He failed to implement decisions from the council,

which caused serious problems with service delivery," said Kubheka on Wednesday.

The alleged fraud relates to Mahlangu awarding tenders to unaccredited companies owned by fellow senior councillors and friends to supply big screens for soccer matches in fan parks between 2008 and 2009. The money for the fan parks project, which was left incomplete, was paid to companies that were unaccredited service providers without valid tax clearance certificates.

Mahlangu is also accused of illegally adjusting the salaries of senior personnel, including his own and that of executive mayor Victor Nkosi, and not paying out the full salaries of ward councillors.

The adjustments led to junior employees embarking on a strike that left the municipality ungovernable in September and October last year.

"The manager for corporate services, Aaron Mahlangu, has been appointed

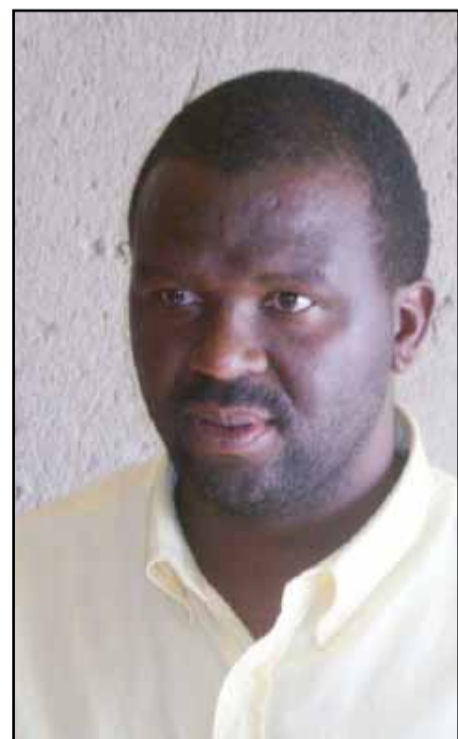
interim municipal manager while William Mahlangu is being investigated by the council's investigating committee," said municipal spokesman Themba Mtsweni.

Added Kubheka: "His suspension proves that he is not fit to lead the council and he will remain on suspension until our investigations are completed. We are confident that we will come up with fruitful results."

Mahlangu could not be reached for comment.

The chief whip of the DA in the municipality, Diamond Ntuli, said the party welcomed Mahlangu's suspension.

"His suspension was expected to have been done in November last year after the corruption was discovered. We appeal to the council to investigate other senior personnel involved in corrupt activities and to ensure that the amount of R2.6-million is fully recovered," said Ntuli.



Chairperson of the council's investigating committee, Thami Kubheka,

A lot expected from the Mabuza's 2010 SOPA

REVIEW AND PREVIEW OF THE SOPA

COMRADE SPIKIRI LOOKS AT THE PAST SOPA AND GIVES AN OPINION ON WHAT SHOULD BE ENVISAGED IN THE 2010 SOPA

It is that time of the year again when the whole province descend to the seat of Parliament at the Government Boulevard at Riverside, those who cannot fit into the August house mill around and bask in the fanfare of the SAPS Brass band and other commercial musicians. Those at home hug their transistor radio's with keen interest to hear if the Premier's speech will touch them in ways that would ease the wholesome strife and struggle against starvation, illnesses, poverty and joblessness. Most are willing the Premier to justify their choices of exercising their suffrage each public election session.

This State of the Province address could not have come at a better time with the province under fire with negative publicity from the media over allegations of state sponsored murders and of the presence of a "hit list" containing names of people to be assassinated two of whom have already been brutally murdered. The State of the Nation comes at a time when municipalities are ablaze with violent uprisings perpetrated by residents who are beckoning for improved service delivery.

The Premier has had to bear the brunt of angry masses at Standerton where he was showered with mantras of war which were an exclusive preserve of the apartheid politicians. The same happened at Mashishing now it's Dipaleseng and one wonders where these scary phenomena will flare up next. We pray that it does not start at Kanyamazane, Pienaar, KaBokweni and Matsulu because if it does then the province will be in flames, judging by the sheer numbers and the militancy displayed by the residences of the mentioned places during the struggle for freedom.

Ziwaphi advised the Premier and his Cabinet when they took office to:

- **Conduct performance audits on certain departments whose budgets disappeared without any tangible benefit for intended beneficiaries. Top on the list was the Department of Education which spend the year of the elections (2009) concentrating on infrastructure projects while neglecting their core function of learning and teaching. The results of this are there for all to see: the metric results stink, thousands of our kids have been sentenced to a future of scraps, morsels and crumbs unless they become criminals.**

The Cabinet ignored our call for the audits, instead, they opted for the strategies of migrating dodgy senior officials from one Department to another. This caused an outcry which fed some national newspapers with endless front page scoops. It was messy and has caused a lot of harm to the image of the province which is now conveniently labeled, the Banana republic.

Ziwaphi also advised the Cabinet to communicate with the public and to



The people of Mpumalanga expect a lot from Premier David Mabuza

be transparent and forthcoming with information. It is only when people do not have a clue what government is doing that their poverty is emphasized and frustration is heightened. The media always take the opportunity to fill the void in communication by supplying a steady diet of stories that may fan the frustration of the people to boiling point.

- Ziwaphi, also reminded the Premier that while it appreciated him bloodying greenhorn politicians to be in charge of government, he was lucky to have a Legislature that is teeming with experience and talent to come in at any stage as MECs and perform.

Until now the reserve capacity has not been called to action by our Premier which means he is satisfied with the current crop of MECs. Put differently, the Premier is saying the current MECs are better than any of the ANC politicians that are sitting in the Legislature.

All these advises could have been achieved within the first hundred days of occupation of office by the Premier. However, that is water under the bridge now, our young Cabinet is already in the centre of a whirlwind, they are fighting fires and storms all around, hopefully, they will learn quickly and quell the disastrous "tsunamis".

Except for those incidences of violent protests, Premier Mabuza should be glad that, generally, his administration

has received a warm welcome from the populace, and have demonstrated their will to give him and his cabinet a chance.

Only time (and we think soon) the people will either affirm or reject the Premier's selection. God forbid, if they choose the latter because our people have learned that currency lie in their ability to come together and create a very destructive force as we have recently experienced in Balfour, Mashishing, Mkhondo and other places.

As Mabuza will, in a period of less than one year, be delivering another State of the Province, we review and preview his previous and his second SOPAS respectively.

On Education

The Premier set pulses racing by announcing that finally the Province will have a fully fledged University. The people would be anxious to hear on the 19th of February how far the government has gone in establishing the life-changing University on our provincial "shores." So far the public has been kept in complete darkness on the government's efforts or lack thereof in so far as this promised facility is concerned. The morsels of information the public received on this matter was when Blade Nzimande announced that Mpumalanga would have its own University "this year" which is laughable to say the least, however, the

University thirsty optimistic people of the province dotted on the words of the Minister, however, bizarre they sounded because they gave us hope.

The Premier also promised to cast the net wider in terms of including more schools under the "no fee" schools which was appreciated. The scholar transport presented problems in the past which the Premier promised to sort out. Since then the officials that had been suspended on charges that included graft and embezzlement on scholar transport have won their case and must be restored to their positions.

Generally the province's state of Education leaves much to be desired, the failure rate is alarmingly high. The less said about leaks of exam papers and teachers helping candidates to crib, the better. It is one scandal after the other in this Department. In fact, Ziwaphi wants to argue that the violence that is sweeping across the province started with kids from Mataffin whose schools had been bulldozed to make way for a stadium. The kids rioted and even burned an expensive German sedan belonging to SAPS before government responded to their legitimate basic demand of a proper school. Soon after several municipalities took a leaf on the actions of the kids and the rest is history.

The province would expect the Premier not only to give assurances that the rot that has bedeviling the Department of Education will be stopped but also to outline a clear programme of transformation that should stretch from the families of scholars along the school centres to the top of the value chain in the central Department. Failure of our exams should be an exception rather than a rule. A nation devoid of proper education is a nation that is destined to perish like the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah (forgive my spelling, I received my biblical studies in Siswati).

The province wants the Premier to give a positive progress on the establishment of the University. Pronouncements that the University will be a reality by the ANC Youth League are reassuring but not enough if they are not backed up by concrete resources, plans and political will by the Cabinet. The tenure of the Cabinet is a mere short five years and by now the province expects that plans are at an advance stage to deliver a state of the art University.

On Health

The Premier promised to establish a Tertiary Hospital in the province, a hospital that will provide highly specialized services and also provide training for medical and clinical practitioners. The province ululated at this ground breaking announcement. On the 19th of February, the province will want the Premier to give feedback on how far the government has gone towards the long awaited hospital.

Mabuza's 2nd State of the Province

FROM PAGE 7

The shortage of skill in the medical industry should be a thing of yesterday once the Tertiary Hospital starts producing highly trained nursing and medical professionals.

On the other hand Ziwaphi wants to congratulate the Department of Health for effort in trying to improve the state of the hospitals in the province. There are still many problems but the some facilities are clearly showing steady improvement. On the services's side, though, Ziwaphi is disappointed by the long queues, shoddy treatment and continuous shortage of medicine at some health centres. The Premier is expected to lay down a programme that is consistent with the basic Human rights of people to receive primary and other health care services.

The jury is still out on whether the health facilities in Nelspruit have the capacity to deal with an influx of soccer lovers who will be in Nelspruit during the month of June. Disaster management and readiness is still questionable but we are hoping the Premier will allay any such fears

On Roads

The state of the roads in the province is atrocious. Ziwaphi welcomes the appointment of Mathew Mohlasedi as the new Superintendent General at Public Works Roads and Transport. His experience on roads and transport and the intimate knowledge of the province should translate in marked systematic improvement of the state of our roads and most importantly, the usage thereof. Moloto road has been improved but the users are reckless and continue to spill innocent blood on the road dubbed the "killer road." The taxi industry needs serious attention to elevate its services to respected levels. The coal haulage project on the coal truck routes needs immediate attention. The Premier announced a programme in partnership with Eskom to rehabilitate the ravaged roads and the province will expect a progress report on that project.

On Public Works

The state is investing hundreds of billions of rands in infrastructure as one strategy to promote the concept of a developmental state. This elevates Public Works to the epicenter of the state's mantra of war against poverty and under-development. Therefore

the Premier is expected to give a countdown of projects and resultant jobs and enterprises benefiting from public infrastructure programmes. He is expected to give details on the Private/Public partnerships already formed and resultant benefits from such. In his speech last year he emphasized the value of PPPs.

The merger of Roads and Transport seem to be complete except for the establishment of the Roads Agency which was promised much to the chagrin of many in the province. These kinds of agencies have proved to be sinkholes which take down public resources with no discernible benefit for the public. Look no further than the National Roads Agency which has squandered public resources, Road Agency in Limpopo is in a perpetual state of limbo wherein the MEC has been having protracted wars with the Board of Trustees resulting in paralysis which earned Limpopo the coveted prize of having the worst roads in the country. Ziwaphi has always said that formation of structures is not a panacea to most of the problems which are as a result of greed, graft, corruption and lack of capacity in most cases. The Premier will be expected to pronounce his thoughts on this matter.

The President promised to generate 4 500 000 job opportunities by 2014, most of which would be created through the EPW Programme. It would be of provincial interest to learn from the Premier how much progress has made on this front in this province.

On Energy

Ziwaphi has always been a forlorn voice in articulating the obvious fact that while we acknowledge that energy management is a national competence but our province cannot abdicate its responsibility to have not only a passing interest on matters of energy because we are the number one producers of that commodity in this country. The mining that feeds the power stations is happening on our home turf. The environmental degradation and associated health problems affect our people and place directly while very little benefit accrues within our borders.

Most of the mining houses and petrochemical firms have their headquarters in Gauteng where the proceeds of their operations in Mpumalanga get accounted for. This is a travesty of justice which the Premier and the people of the province must fight to reverse

We are aware that we are not a federal state but it is a weak argument to say we must not take an interest in strategic commodities that are exploited on our backyard just because we are a unitary state. Just take a look at Limpopo, a significant of mining rights around the Waterberg area have been given to Limpopo enterprises. It would be interesting to hear from the Premier how much of our mineral resources are in the hands of Mpumalanga enterprises.

This province should be leading on alternative sources of energy production but we still have not heard of any specific programme to propel us towards that direction. We hope the Premier will take a lead on this subject and assist the DDG responsible for Environmental management in the province. Global warming is an issue that we take seriously, Ziwaphi, knows that there is a school of thought that trivializes this matter and rubbishes it as ploy engendered by tree-huggers to generate wealth for themselves but we have also had Dr. Raath and his associates among them President Mbeki who shouted on roof tops that HIV does not cause AIDS, that's beside the point when people are dying droves. I am not Prius driver but I know enough to acknowledge that a time has come for the humanity to start treating the life supporting environment with a little bit of respect.

On SMME Development

Ziwaphi and many people have repeatedly asked questions about the Growth Fund that government was going to kick start with R200 million and the private sector was going to complement it with R600 million. Until today government is ducking and diving when questioned about this fund.

It was a shock last year when the ink on the resolution document of the Provincial Summit had hardly dried to learn that MEGA was launching a new fund which only had a paltry few million rands. The fanfare generated around this laughable fund was grossly exaggerated and was just a public relations affair meant to pull a fast one over the most gullible of the gullible of our people. The Premier needs to make good of the Growth Fund to restore faith if not to really assist develop SMMEs.

On Agriculture and rural Development

We suggest that the Premier change the name of the department responsible for

Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration to something like, the Department of Tractors.

Those that have long memories will remember that one senior official of the Department of Agriculture left the department with a cloud hanging over her head as a result of procurement and subsequent disappearance into thin air of tractors.

Recently, the Department has been reported to the Presidency for flouting legislation on, you guessed right, procurement of tractors.

Rural development is one of the priorities enshrined in the ANC manifesto and subsequent medium term strategy framework. We are expecting the Premier to outline good programmes to advance this ideal especially because our province is 61% rural depending on the definition use choose for "rural"

In conclusion, we would like the Premier to announce solid programmes to address:

- **Crime** especially in townships and trustlands which often does not enjoy prominence in the white control media
- **Economic Development** programmes with a bias towards black empowerment of the people of the province
- Address 2010 business opportunities. The Bergvlam fan park has caused an outcry. Real football lovers in townships and rural areas want to know what infrastructure has been devised for them.
- **Disaster management** capacity especially during the world cup tournament
- **Skills development** for the people
- **Basic services**, such as shelter, potable water, energy, primary health care and, transport and education
- **Scholar transport** and feeding scheme at schools
- Old age facilities

We are the first to acknowledge that all these requirement cannot be met at once but we want to see honest effort and sincerity from those who owe their office to the general populace of our tolerant and beautiful people. In the recent municipal by-elections the ruling party swept all the vacant positions which is a sign that the people believe in the ruling party and that they are no turn coats. Aluta continua!

Armed burglars attack politician while husband is away

BY THABISILE KHOZA

MALALANE

Six balaclava-clad gunmen broke into an Mpumalanga politician's home early on Wednesday morning and robbed her of R1 000 and two vehicles.

Joyce Sibiyi, a councillor at the Nkomazi local municipality and wife of Johan Sibiyi of Johan Sibiyi Promotions, woke up to find the men standing around her bed at

about 1:45am at the couple's home in Schoemansdal near the Swaziland border.

"When the suspects realised that she didn't have much money on her or a gun, they decided to take the Volvo and bakkie," said Schoemansdal police spokesperson Constable Nompilo Qwabe.

Qwabe said Sibiyi's husband, who owns a chain of music stores and recording studios, was in Johannesburg on business at the time.

The gunman had broken in and forced a live-in employee to show them to Sibiyi's room.

The councillor told police that the men demanded money, car keys, bank cards, safe keys and a gun from her, but that she and her husband don't have a safe at home or a gun.

"So she gave them the vehicle keys, bank card and a R1 000 from her wallet," Qwabe said.

The suspects drove off in both vehicles



Johan Sibiyi - his family got robbed

Mandela a symbol of discipline & patriotism

Emotional and physical recollection of yesterday South Africa remains an aide memoire of an immense sorry and suffering.

In spite of this, few fearless sons and daughters of the soil emerged. This is an epoch where leadership position was not fashionable and had no celebratory social standing in a community.

An era where there was no known price tag for voting horse. The era of non-casting votes for employment and positions for power. Colonizers and settlers treated Black people of South Africa in their native land like they where they were not born of a woman.

Today we celebrate two decades of Comrade President Nelson Mandela's release from prison.

His children grew up without a father, who, when he returned, became a father of the nation.

This celebration marks also the release of all political prisoners and the return of exiles.

Nelson Mandela and many leaders of our political struggle for freedom paid a supreme sacrifice and their actions gave evidence to the fact that the relation between them and motherland was and still sealed with blood.

Mandela was not recruited, he joined



SELLO Shai is the Senior Parliamentary Officer in the Office of the Premier - he writes in his personal capacity

the struggle voluntary. At this hour of destiny, as a former slave unfortunately in my native land that agony moment of yesterday South Africa shall never and never evaporate like a snow. The grave crime against humanity (Apartheid) which black people were subjected to, its footprints in spite of everything is engraved in our hearts. It is important to note that bona fide leaders of Mandela's caliber emerged out of this state of affairs.



NELSON MANDELA stepping out of prison after being incarcerated for 27 years by the apartheid government. Next to him is ex-wife, Winnie.

In the present day as poor and destitute as we are, the global community marks the two decades of the release of the most known world political prisoner, chivalrous, fearless, patriotic and heroic soldier of our time, one of our own Comrade President Nelson Mandela.

The entire human race has a reason to continuously celebrate this release, because it is this release which brought FIFA 2010 World Soccer festivals to Africa.

As poor and destitute as we are, there are still those people who are in leadership positions and are leading a bling-bling Sub-culture life publicly boosting for gulping exclusive whisky while there are people who are still living without clean water.

It is pertinent at this juncture to seize this opportune time as peace loving Africans and people of the world and pay homage to this jingoist and a real patriot who made a dazzling contribution to the struggle for sovereignty and decorum for all in our country, Africa and the World.

To you Comrade Madiba, twenty years since your release the land is still owned by the few and the people are still suffering.

Since your freedom the economy is still in the hands of lily whites. Since your release poverty in black communities has doubled. The mines are still owned by foreigners.

As a soldier Comrade Mandela you did not allow suffering, as a result of incarceration, banishment, interrogations, harassment foul language and name-calling from counter revolutionaries to alter your center of attention and neglect the sacrifice like quite a few did.

The time is now for all South Africans to go back to their mirrors and look if they are still the same. Let me borrow the words of Nigerian Chika Onyeni from his popular book Capitalist Nigger – the road to success when he said “The White master, Black slave mentality will continue to exist within the Black community because of our victim mentality.

We believe if we continue to cry racism and oppression, the oppressors will change, feel empathy for us and give us what we want. But that is not reality of the world in which we live. It is a jungle out there. It is the survival of the fittest.

Those who dare to rise above mediocrity and beyond the use of racism as an excuse for their failures are those who will survive in this world. No group can survive when all their needs are met by others. At the point, they will feel burdened to continue to provide for us and cut off the sources of our pleasures”. The high level of stupidly and ignorance demonstrated on a daily base by so-called community leaders who claim to represent the marginalized in numerous service delivery demonstrations who believe that by burning their own schools, libraries, clinics and offices they are people heroes I humbly request them to read literatures like this one and they will insult the day they were conceived.

Comrade Mandela your sacrifice during the intricate journey of South Africa of yesterday, have brought today on the cards and blood sweat for your country has become our water of life. Thank you for the extra mile, you are indeed larger than life. Amandla.



REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE 2008/09 ANNUAL REPORT NOTICE # 7/2010

Nkomazi Municipality invites the public to comment on its annual report for the financial year 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2009.

Copies of this report are available from 05 February 2010.

1. Malalane Civic Centre (09 Park Street, Malalane)
2. Komatipoort Municipal Offices
3. KaMhlushwa Municipal Offices
4. KaMaqhekeza Municipal Offices
5. Thusong Service Centres (Mbangwane, Matsamo Telecenter, Louisville)

Anyone can make representations and/ or submit comments to the Office of the Municipal Manager, 09 Park Street, or by fax to 013 790 0886, for enquiries please call 013 790 0245.

All representations and/ or comments should be in writing.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION: 26 FEBRUARY 2010 AT 13H00

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Bail granted to Siyathemba protesters

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

BALFOUR

Fourteen of the 22 suspects who were arrested on Monday in connection with the riots in Siyathemba township outside Balfour, Mpumalanga, were given R500 bail each on Wednesday.

The 22 suspects were arrested for arson, theft and public violence after a municipal office belonging to the Dipaliseng local municipality, they also looted shops belonging to foreign nationals.

The 22 suspects, including four minors, appeared briefly in the Balfour magistrate's court.

"The 14 were given bail and will re-appear again on March 14. Charges were dropped against four because of lack of evidence and the remaining four were referred to the department of social services for diversion programmes because they are minors,"

said Balfour police spokesperson, Sergeant Sam Tshabalala.

He said another 10 people were arrested and charged for public violence and arson on Tuesday evening after a local library was burnt down.

"Nine of the people who were arrested on Tuesday will appear in court on Thursday. The tenth one is a foreign national who was arrested for assaulting a member of the public. He is expected to appear in court on the same day. We are currently determining if he acted in self defence," he said.

Tshabalala said the situation was relatively calm on Wednesday and that police had fanned out across the township to conduct patrols.

The residents of Siyathemba are called for the mayor to step down saying that he failed to address problems raised during previous service delivery protests in June last year.

"We have only three demands here. One, we want all our local councillors to step down; two, we demand to be immediately re-demarcated back into Gauteng because of better service delivery there and, finally, we want Burnstone Gold Mine to be shut down until they employ more people from the local community," said one protest leader, Herbert Zitha, on Wednesday.

Great Basin Gold has insisted that it has employed locals at their Burnstone Gold Mine in Balfour.

On Tuesday, a delegation of MECs visited the area and included MEC for co-operative governance and traditional affairs, Norman Mokoena, safety and security MEC Sibongile Manana and MEC for economic development, environment affairs and tourism Jabu Mahlangu.

"The MECs have condemned the unwarranted violence, malicious damage to property and attack on the

foreign nationals. They also called on all learners to return to school. They also called upon the law enforcement agents to apprehend those criminal elements that seek to bring disorder to the community," said co-operative governance and traditional affairs spokesperson, Simphiwe Kunene.

MEC Mokoena said it was unfortunate that the community library was destroyed when the department of culture, Sport and Recreation had made R200 000 available to equip it with computers and internet facilities.

"Significant progress has been made in addressing the issues this community raised with government last year. Some elements are shifting goal posts here and it will not be allowed. We urge community leaders to exercise restraint and ensure that the situation is normalised and property is protected," said Mokoena on Wednesday.

MEC encourages citizens to hand in illegal weapons

BY THABISILE KHOZA

MBOMBELA

Mpumalanga MEC for community safety, security and liaison Sibongile Manana has urged local citizens to take advantage of the National Firearm Amnesty and hand in any unlicensed weapons.

A similar amnesty campaign in 2005 resulted in over 98 000 weapons being removed from circulation in the province.

"The reduction of firearms in communities will assist in ensuring that crime is reduced because it has been established that most of the crimes are committed with illegal firearms," said MEC Manana.

The campaign is called "Awuleth' umshini wam", which means "Bring back my machine gun."

The MEC said illegal weapons can be handed in at the nearest police station,

without the handler fearing arrest if the weapon wasn't used to commit a crime.

"People who failed to license their firearms during the licensing period will also be given a chance to license their weapons in terms of the firearm control Act," she added.

Mpumalanga police spokesperson Senior Superintendent Sibongile Nkosi said on Wednesday that a number of police stations in the province had reported receiving firearms, mainly from those whose family members had died, leaving weapons to them.

"We will wait until the window period for amnesty has ended to determine the exact total of weapons handed over in the province," said Nkosi.

The amnesty period runs from January 11 to April 11.

In neighbouring Limpopo, police are distributing pamphlets at taxi ranks, shopping malls and streets in Polokwane to remind people to hand



MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Sibongile Manana

in illegal weapons, said Limpopo police spokesperson Superintendent Mohale Ramatseba.

"We also answer any questions that people may have about the process," he

said.

Meanwhile, legal gun owners who have not yet reapplied for their licences may hold on to their firearms pending a ruling by the high court in Pretoria.

In terms of a temporary court order, all firearm licences issued under the repealed Arms and Ammunition Act of 1969 will remain valid until the court decides on a challenge by the SA Hunters and Game Conservation Association of certain provisions of the Firearms Control Act of 2000.

Some 597 863 firearms were destroyed between 2005 and 2009.

According to national police minister Nathi Mthethwa, the illegal weapons are melted down. Between 2005 and 2009, 67 286 were confiscated in Gauteng, 1424 in the Free State, 5200 in Limpopo, 2606 in Mpumalanga and 4095 in the North West Province.

"Students are our partners" says TUT Deputy Vice Chancellor

The main speaker at this the 2010 event which was held at the University campus recently, was Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) for Finance and Business Development Joyce Mashabela, Joyce Mashabela. Among others she presented the university's philosophy on the relationship between the institution and students.

"Traditionally, universities regarded students as products... to be passively moulded to a pre-determined design, another view held by some institutions is that students are clients... to be serviced in return for financial gain. The Tshwane University of Technology

subscribes to neither of these two views, but see students as active partners in its quest for excellence," she said at the Nelspruit Campus Academic Opening for 2010.

The DVC said students are active partners in the university's core operational areas, mainly education, research and development, as well as community service.

"Our approach is practical, to prepare you, add value in the world of work from day one and to maximize your chances of employment after graduation," she said.

Also at the event was Prof John Shongwe, Campus Director, who spoke of the need for students to familiarize themselves with all the policies of the institution and called for the students to maintain discipline.

"Remember, when we ask disciplinary measures against you or ask you not to come back is because you have done things which are not supposed to be done. Read the policies," insisted Prof Shongwe.



Prof John Shongwe (Campus Director) and Joyce Mashabela Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Finance and Business Development.

A befitting tribute to a true revolutionary

PORTIA SHABANGU

OUR OWN HERO WHO DIED AT THE HANDS OF THE APARTHEID SECURITY FORCE

The February month has significant historical milestones that have contributed to South Africa's democracy. 11 February marks the 21 Anniversary of the release of Former President, Dr Nelson Mandela, a Nobel Peace Laureate released from the Pollsmoor Prison after spending 27 years incarcerated for fighting for the liberation of South Africa from the shackles of apartheid. Just last week, we were commemorating the 20th anniversary of the unbanning of all political organizations.

Mandela's struggle for freedom, symbolizes the commitment of the ANC and its Alliance partners to see the masses and generations to come enjoying the benefits of the democratic rule. Mandela's struggle and others (some of whom are unaccounted for) who died in the midst of the struggle, have laid a foundation that will ensure that South Africa does not slide back into the same situation that we fought against for 40 years. It is therefore not coincidental that this year's State of the Nation address is delivered on the day when we commemorate the day of his release.

The liberation of the country came through combined efforts of freedom fighters such as Mandela, and a number of martyrs who laid down their lives, driven by the desire to see South Africa freed from the shackles of the monstrous rule, declared by the International community as a crime

against humanity. One such martyr is Comrade Portia Shabangu. She was brutally assassinated by the Vlakplaas Security Branch, led by Colonel Eugene de Kok in Swaziland in 1989. Comrade Portia was assassinated along with two other activists from the Free State, Comrade Thabo Mohale and Comrade Mpho Moshong in Swaziland. They were lured by the security agents to Swaziland under the pretext that they will be trained by Umkhonto we Sizwe. Today, is their 21st anniversary since their assassination. This information was shared by De Kok during the TRC hearings. (<http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/decisions/2001/ac21227a.htm>)

At the time of her death, Cde Portia was a committed cadre of the movement. She was a student at Mgwenya College of Education. Before that, she worked as a teacher at Khaliphani Secondary School at Kanyamazane. Her former students, describe her as a passionate person, and one of the best teachers to have come out of the school. They describe her as a teacher who was passionate about her work, and always willing to walk an extra mile to help the black child to succeed. Her only surviving daughter is Marcia Khoza-Mkwanazi.

Cde Portia has been honoured for her sterling role in the fight against apartheid. Two streets, one in Hazyview and one at Kanyamazane, have been renamed after her. Her name also appears in the Cenotaph



Portia Shabangu

which was build at Matsulu, aimed at recognizing the role of struggle heroes. Her legacy in the struggle is to be imprinted in the history of the country with the imminent establishment of a Foundation to be named after her. The foundation will amongst other things:

- Promote Peace, Justice and Reconciliation,
- Reconstruct, Develop and contribute to the betterment of lives of people.
- Promote dialogue and public discourse on topical issues of National and International interest with the view to prevent the country and the world from sliding back to similar apartheid political environment of any magnitude

to the Nazi era, Hutu/Tutsi conflict and similar conflicts in the world.

The foundation will roll out some of the following programmes:

- Memorial Lecture
- Leadership Academy as a training institution for the youth, with the view to produce future leaders and the think-tank of Mpumalanga.
- Human Resource Development, through mobilization of resources in the form of Bursaries, Internships and Sponsorships to assist the families in similar circumstances
- Perform rituals on site, where the killing of the three victims took place.

Her 21st anniversary coincides with the fierce debate currently taking place in the country, about whether President Zuma should pardon De Kok for the crimes he committed in the past.

His hands have bloodstains, considering the reign of terror which he instituted against people like Cde Portia. It will be interesting to see how President Zuma will deal with the matter. The best we can do is to honour Cde Portia for her contribution in the struggle for the freedom of the country.

The Foundation is still work in progress. The authors of the article are: Mr Godrich Gardee and Mr George Mthethwa.

“Hit-list” faxed to community newspaper

BY SYDNEY MASINGA

NELSPRUIT

Mpumalanga Premier David Mabuza has been challenged to respond publicly to the allegations of a hit-list targeting those who may have evidence of corruption surrounding the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

A community newspaper claims the hitlist, titled Operation Clean Up 2014, was faxed to them on Friday from a busy internet cafe following weeks of debate over whether it existed.

On it are reportedly 10 names, including the names of two victims, Mbombela municipal speaker Jimmy Mohlala who was murdered on January 4 last year and sports, arts and culture spokesperson Sammy Mpatlanyane who was murdered on January 8 this year.

The other eight names on the list include Mbombela mayor Lassy Chiwayo who has previously confirmed receiving death threats on his cellphone around the time of Mohlala's murder, journalist Alfred Moselagomo, politician Steven Ngubeni, lobbyist Godfrey Ntombela, businessman Thabo Theledi, David Mahlobo, Bongo Thomas and Richard Silawu. The newspaper reported that it forwarded a copy of the hitlist to the police.

The Congress of the People's (Cope) member of the provincial legislature (MPL), Zale Madonsela, said the premier's silence on the matter was creating suspicion.

There have been allegations of attempts within the African National Congress (ANC) to have him recalled as premier.

“In a province filled with tension and fear, amidst allegations of murder plots, the silence of the Premier speaks volumes,” said Madonsela this week.

She noted that the ruling alliance of the ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) were the first to dispute that the speaker's assassination was politically motivated.

“No amount of spin-doctoring can remove the suspicion of the masses, except for the Premier (who must) pronounce himself on what he knows,” added Madonsela.

On Sunday, the Sunday Times reported that a self-confessed hitman had come forward and claimed to have been invited to a senior ANC leader's farm and hired to kill whistle blowers who are on the alleged hitlist.

Provincial ANC spokesperson, Paul Mbenyane, said the allegations of an ANC member's involvement in crafting the alleged hit-list and funding the

executions did not mean the party was behind the plot.

“The ANC does not kill, but instead mobilises people into joining as members...to improve their lives in society. Any person... found to be involved in any criminal activities like murder...cannot be a member of the ANC, no matter what position they can be holding,” said Mbenyane on Tuesday.

He said if an ANC member was found guilty of murder by a court of law, they lost their party membership.

The premier's spokesperson, Mabutho Sithole, said the allegations were a “pure fabrication of lies” to defame Mabuza and the provincial government and undermine service delivery.

Sithole said the only plot was one in which Mpumalanga journalists are being used to discredit the Premier.

“The dubious agenda is probably intended to ultimately influence that the premier be re-called. We thus challenge anyone with verifiable proof to bring it forth to the appropriate law enforcement agencies,” he said.

The law enforcement agencies are no closer to solving the murders, however.

Despite a R100 000 reward for information leading to the capture and conviction of the speaker's killers, no

one has been caught.

Mohlala's death last year came a week before he was due to testify in the disciplinary hearing of former municipal manager Jacob Dladla, who had been accused of financial mismanagement of the Mbombela World Cup Stadium project. Dladla has since resigned.

The case was taken over officially by the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigations, the Hawks, in January, but Hawks spokesperson Musa Zondi has warned that even if high-profile figures were involved in Mohlala's murder, they would not be investigated without concrete evidence.

“What would be the basis for interviewing those people who are implicated without evidence?” said Zondi. “There is no concrete evidence against anyone in this case, and as a result it is more difficult to make headway.”

Police also have no suspects for Mpatlanyane's murder. Mpatlanyane was shot in his bedroom in Nelspruit on January 8 this year, reportedly for refusing to be part of a R20 million deal linked to the 2010 tender and a prominent ANC leader member.

Diski Dance comes to Mpumalanga

BY MBEKEZELI MBULI

MBOMBELA

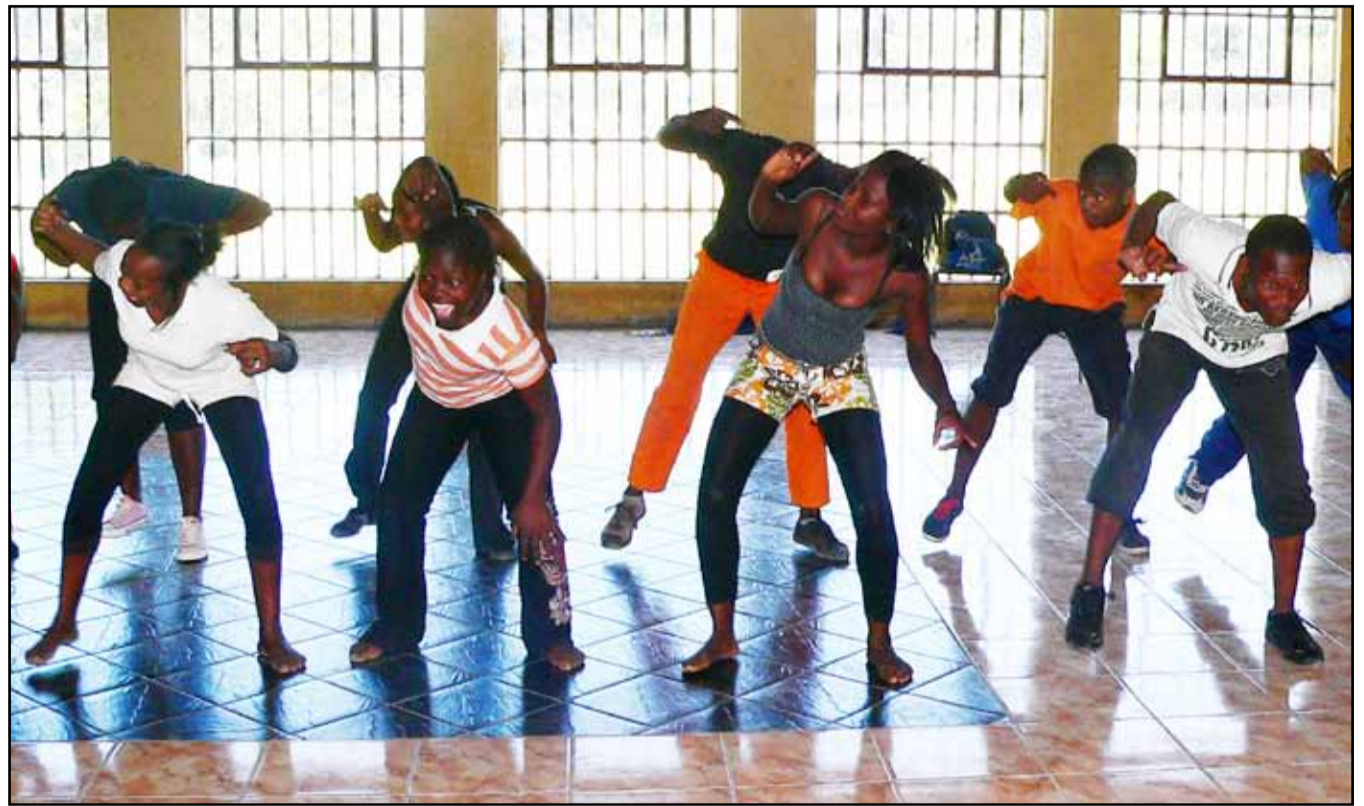
NELSPRUIT – Wendy Ramokgadi's 2010 signature dance, the famous Diski Dance, has landed Easthigh College of Excellence's shores, and Siyeta Diski Dance group is poised to reach the greater heights.

The Diski Dance, synonymous with football moves, is a uniform routine that showcases the country's passion for sport. "This is our own township football style," says Wendy Ramokgadi, a Gauteng based choreographer who came with this dance concept.

"The whole idea was that we needed to come up with something that is truly South African. Our country's football is rhythmic, and so all the moves that we use in the dance are those same moves that are used on the South African football pitch, the moves you can only find in our country," he says.

The dance, that has spread so widely when it was performed during the launch of Football Friday in Gauteng, also reached the lowveld escarpment region. Siyeta Development Project is Mpumalanga's custodian of the Diski Dance concept.

"The concept of this dance is to show our welcoming spirit as a nation and everyone is entitled to learn to dance



As a woman living with Siyeta comes with Diski Dance

because that is something that we have to demonstrate during the 2010 Fifa World cup games," says Joseph Ntimba, spokesperson for the Siyeta Development Project at Easthigh College.

Ntimba says their dance group has attracted massive support of followers and recently they have performed the diskie dance for the Mbombela Mayor,

Lassy Chiwayo, during the launch of Football Friday roadshows.

"I didn't expect to draw this much followers when we first launched our diskie dance performance in front of a thousand audience on a New Year's Eve at the Rugby Stadium last year," Ntimba enthuses.

Since then, well-known supermarkets

chain stores in the province have shown interested.

"They are inviting us to perform for their customers and teach their staff members," Ntimba says. Among other activities that Siyeta is engaged in are traditional dance, contemporary dance, theatrical dance, performing art and poetry singing.

The 2010 Selati Super cup gets underway

BY MBEKEZELI MBULI

NKOMAZI

The much anticipated sixth edition of the Selati Super Cup kicks off on February 27.

This year's installment of this lucrative amateur soccer tourney has to compete for attention with other major events around the country, the 2010 Soccer World Cup, the celebration of the 20 years since the country's first democratic president, Nelson Mandela was released in jail after spending 27 years.

Not only is the tourney set to make history but also to make one deserving team richer as the prize money is also expected to go higher than in the previous installments.

According to the tourney's co-ordinator, Kenneth Phiri, this year's tournament has already started making history by registering more than 140 male teams.

"This year's tourney is definitely going to be big as we have already registered more than 140 teams and we are still getting more teams. Even teams from outside the region want to participate," said Phiri.



Flashback: Action from the 2009 selati Super Cup. Shongwe Chiefs (yellow jersey) won the competition.

He said that all the tournament sponsors were happy at what it has achieved so far and how it has empowered local teams and individuals.

"Selati Cup was started with the aim of creating a vibe towards the build up of the 2010 Soccer Cup and we believe that the tournament has successfully achieved that. This tourney has tremendously grown

from just being a regional event to being a power house which has caught the attention of the rest of the province and some parts of the country," explained Phiri who has been with the tourney since its inception in 2005.

The first draw of this professionally run soccer tournament is scheduled for next week Monday, with the first game billed for February 27.

Phiri confirmed that the finals of the tourney will be staged on May 22, just before the start of the World Cup, at a venue still to be confirmed.

Last year's champions, Shongwe Chiefs are set to defend their crown, which will make the tourney interesting as no other team has successfully defended the title.