

BUDGET DEBATE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

VOTE 05

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The security of any institution cannot be overemphasised and for that matter we need upright police men and women.

They need to accept that theirs is to maintain law and order, to protect and secure life and property. If they develop a sense of greed and engage in corrupt activities of demanding bribes or even accepting bribes if offered as it sometimes is the case the area they are in charge of is lost as they will be acting contrary to the department's values and standards. The egotism and egoism of some law enforcement officers negate the Principles of Batho Pele which seek to promote altruism

As much as all people have to work in ideal conditions so do the police. Some police stations are such that no one can look forward to go to work there. The buildings are squalid, unsafe and not cared for. To mind here, Hon Chair, comes the Letlhabile Police Station in the Madibeng municipality. It is a structure inherited from the apartheid days when it was put up in a black residential area because **“dit was goed genoeg vir hulle”**. We cannot allow this to continue; our people deserve better. A police station behoving the present day status has to be built in that area.

It is possible that even the Provincial Police Commissioner may never have set foot there because it is far just as the capital of the province is far and backward for the top brass of the province to have their office in Mmabatho. They want to be along the main road to Johannesburg and Pretoria paying scant regard to the security of the Premier of this province. All other heads of departments with national competences are based in Mmabatho. Police should not be an exception. We can call on George Orwell's wisdom and state that for us no pigs should be more equal than others.

Much has been said and documented on Community Policing Forums but because of lack of oversight and direction they at times deteriorate and serve as vigilantes which is unfortunate.

The police in turn are lethargic in responding to reported cases. It takes hours on end before they can arrive at the crime scene and invariably the complainant is treated as the criminal or perpetrator. The service expected of them is superseded by the force mentality. This then results in some cases not being reported by some people who resent being interrogated arrogantly while distressed.

The UCDP welcomes the reinstatement of specialised units such as stock theft, child protection, domestic violence and others as called for in our manifesto. Their withdrawal in the first place was just as absurd as it was counter productive in reducing crime and militated against the maintenance of law and order.

Public Safety is charged with coordinating the criminal justice system in the province and sister departments such as Social development, National Intelligence Agency, Correctional Services, Independent Complaints Directorate, South African Police Service and the Directorate of Public Prosecutions should co-operate so that crime may be cut down. The reported intransigence of some in this regard is fertile ground for a rise in criminality in the province and should be discouraged.

Let me in conclusion, Hon Chair, thank the men and women in blue on the exquisite manner in which they acquitted themselves during the Confederation Cup Games. They did us proud and we hope come 2010, they will be on top of the situation.