

PUBLIC SAFETY BUDGET 2010/2011

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The mettle of the police will be put to a test as we approach the 2010 FIFA world cup. The extent to which they are helpful will be tested. Their tolerance will be tested and their people centredness will come to the fore.

Last week members of the portfolio committee had the opportunity to attend a briefing by the police in Rustenburg and Phokeng on their state of readiness for the occasion. I left the place impressed with the extent to which they appear to be on top of the situation. They are aware that it is here and they can feel it

We pray much their strength that they will give as sterling a performance as they did during the Confederation Cup last year but they should bear in mind that this time around the bar has been raised higher.

The conduct of some police leaves much to be desired. Quite often we learn of how they ill treat members of the public and suspects. Quite often we learn of how they extort money from members of the public.

Their training or lack thereof in investigating cases results in suspects being discharged for lack of substantial evidence from the investigating officers.

The recent arrest of an investigating officer in the Eugene Terre'blanche case says much about the training of our detectives in eliciting information without using force. There is no reason why a Lieutenant Colonel had to be appointed to take over the investigation if it were not sloppy work. The question is until when this will hold that when people fail to do their work well a senior officer is called upon to lift that one's hand

There are of course some who do marvelous work. I can mention Warrant Officer Khumalo at the Sun City police station who was assigned a case of house breaking after one colleague of his dawdled on the case for six months without the known suspect appearing in court. But after Khumalo took over the case the burglar appeared in court on two occasions.

Our concern in the UCDP, which I hope the MEC will find time to answer unlike last year, is why the provincial police headquarters are in Potchefstroom, two hundred kilometers from the provincial capital. This is an anomaly taking place only in the North West Province. This I know irks even those in the ruling party. We have to know why it is like this even if it may be political expediency

In recent times people drowned around Mmabatho and divers had to come all the way from Potchefstroom. One would have expected all heads and specialists in their fields should be within reach and at the back and call of the premier.

Traffic officers have to be alerted that theirs is not only to churn out traffic fines to raise revenue. They should not hide behind bushes but should maintain visibility to avoid being viewed as vultures waiting to pounce on a carcass as they stop unsuspecting motorists. We also appeal to motorists to make life easy for these our officers.

I still have to come across a situation where traffic officers stop a motorist, ask for a driver's license, check if lights and reflectors are functioning well and whether tyres are in good condition and even if there are faults the motorist is given a warning to fix or repair the faults

That way we shall after some time. know that they are placing Batho Pele and are not driving those vehicles marked JAWS to chew people.

While we appreciate that more licensing centres may be opened in the spirit of Batho Pele we should also be very circumspect as such proliferation may result in corruption as money is involved in all these.

We in the UCDP maintain that time has come that the public be educated about the imminent AARTO ticketing system which will result on points being deducted from motorists leading to suspensions of licenses. September is round the corner and people have to be made aware of what is lying ahead.

The UCDP will support the budget vote

