

Statement on national response to public violence

13 July 2021 - 8:45pm



President Cyril Ramaphosa has embarked on a round of consultations with leadership of different sectors of society to develop a society-wide response to the violence and destruction affecting many parts of the country.

This outreach supplements the mobilisation of the South African Police Service, the South African National Defence Force and other law enforcement bodies to prevent public violence, loss of life and damage to property.

On Monday, 12 July 2021, government ministers engaged with business leadership on the situation in the country and agreed on several areas of cooperation.

Today, Tuesday, 13 July 2021, President Ramaphosa chaired the meeting of the National Security Council to assess developments around the country and coordinate government's security response – including intelligence gathering – to the widespread criminality.

This evening, the President, accompanied by several Ministers, met with religious leaders from the different faith communities. The leaders expressed support for government's efforts in bringing stability to a number of areas where incidents of interest is taking place. The religious leaders expressed support for the deployment of the SANDF to support the police in stabilising the situation, and also called for a comprehensive response to the societal conditions enabling the events unfolding around the country.

Tomorrow morning, Wednesday 14 July 2021, the President will have a consultation with leaders of political parties.

Government leaders are also engaging with informal and small business associations, community leaders, traditional leaders and others, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

In this evening's meeting, religious leaders urged government to consider allowing communities of faith to gather for worship, while observing COVID-19 health regulations, as part of the national effort to restore calm and provide counselling to

communities.

President Ramaphosa welcomed the concern expressed by interfaith leaders in events in the country and welcomed a proposal for a national day of prayer.

Among developments today, the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster has indicated that all law enforcement and security agencies, including metro and traffic police, are working together to ensure public order policing, patrolling in identified "hotspot" areas and protecting key public and private infrastructure that is targeted by the perpetrators of violence.

These law enforcement agencies have also been tasked to protect COVID-19 vaccine storage sites, schools and clinics where vaccinations are currently rolled out.

As at 13h00 today, 1,230 suspects had been arrested in connection with public violence and looting.

In KwaZulu-Natal, 547 suspects have been arrested while 683 suspects are in custody in Gauteng.

Minister of Police Bheki Cele and Acting Minister of Health Mamoloko Kubayi separately visited Alexandra, Johannesburg, to assess the situation on the ground.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) is putting together a team of special prosecutors who have been instructed to oppose bail for suspects associated with public violence and economic sabotage.

The law enforcement agencies have also been tasked to enforce the Disaster Management Act Regulations, especially ensuring observance of the curfew which is from 9pm to 4am daily.

Communities are reminded to report any criminal incident to the SAPS hotline of 08600 10111.

Media enquiries: Nonceba Mhlauli, Spokesperson to Acting Minister in The Presidency, Ms Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, on 072 623 3462.

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