

## KZN MEC FOR FINANCE BELINDA SCOTT OFFICIATES AT THE DISTRICT PRAYER

With the scourge of social ills and political killings currently engulfing KwaZulu-Natal, it has become imperative that all sorts of progressive interventions are sought to fight this challenge.

KwaZulu-Natal is currently experiencing various incidents of killings and other social ills. These include those of a political nature like political killings, taxi-related violence and gender-based violence, amongst others.

The Premier and the Provincial Executive Council announced the Provincial Prayer Month commencing from 07 June to 07 July under the theme “Sekwanele – Stop The Killings”.

Each of the 11 KwaZulu-Natal District were also directed to host Prayer Days. Following this commitment KZN MEC for Finance, Belinda Scott who is also the uMgungundlovu District Champion MEC hosted a prayer day and a walk.

UMgungundlovu is one of the most affected districts when it comes to political killings.

MEC Scott invited different stakeholders from faith-based organisations to partake in the Prayer. The Prayer commenced with a walk from McDonalds to the City Hall. Over 500 people attended the prayer.

MEC Scott was accompanied by Msunduzi Mayor Cllr Themba Njilo who partook in the walk as well as uMgungundlovu District Mayor Cllr Thobekile Maphumulo.

Addressing hundreds of attendees, MEC Scott began her speech by evoking the memory of former President Nelson Mandela whom despite the ravages of apartheid rule, has always sought to achieve liberation without purporting bloodshed and civil clash.

“The Prayer month that started on the 7th of June to 7 July is a time for self-reflection. We are 24 years into our democracy. Through our much beloved Madiba – this era began as one of forgiveness and reconciliation,” she said.

MEC Scott said it was disheartening that after the onset of a constitutional democracy in our country, the result of a hard won struggle lasting 3 centuries, a sense of fear has set in as the cloud of violence keeps gaining momentum. She said it has become necessary for us to find a new voice to address the rampaging violence in our Province.

“Government of the day; has been reconstructing the South African society with a developmental agenda so as to ensure that the historical constraints placed on human

potential be removed. We have done the groundwork so that all people can be active citizens and participate fully in the economic growth of this country without having to face prejudice or discrimination,” she said.

MEC Scott said higher education, free access to basic education, health, schools, clinics, roads, water, electricity, social grants, housing and sanitation are service delivery programmes that this government has provided so that all citizens may take up the opportunities that our new democratic dispensation has to offer.

“Despite these successes, our society seems to be sinking deeper and deeper into acts of violence. **What has gone wrong? What are we not doing right? Why is the dark cloud of violence gaining momentum?** I ask these questions not because of my political position but a concerned citizen active in defending the rights of the oppressed,” she said.

MEC Scott stressed that as history reflects, our past leaders fought for equality and peace among all men and women, to restore the dignity of the people of this country. She said they worked hard to build our democracy on a principle of non-violence and negotiation as a means of solving political problems. What has led to the erosion of that ethos?

“Our greatest triumph as a new democracy was the smooth transition from apartheid rule to democracy. The dawn of democracy ushered in a great sense of hope for all, that all shall live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others,”.

It is my profound view that the voice of the church working with government needs to be loud for social cohesion to become a reality in this Province. The ongoing efforts of government towards social cohesion and national unity remain a centre of social discourse. Let us work together towards building a just and non-violent society.