MEDIA STATEMENT

Date: Sunday, 12 January 2025

Attention: Journalists, News Editors and Executive Producers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MASILELA SENDS A STRONG WARNING TO ON-SITE LIQUOR CONSUMPTION TRADERS NOT COMPLYING WITH THEIR LICENSE CONDITIONS FOLLOWING THE SENSELESS MASS MURDER OF EIGHT PEOPLE OUTSIDE A TAVERN IN PIENAAR, MBOMBELA

Mbombela – Mpumalanga MEC for Economic Development and Tourism (DEDT), Ms. Makhosazane Masilela, says the Department, working with its Public Entity, the Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER), will heighten efforts to enforce compliance with trading hours, security measures and operational regulations as contemplated under the Mpumalanga Liquor Licensing Act. The MEC said this following the senseless mass murder of eight revelers outside a tavern in Pienaar, in the City of Mbombela.

"We condemn in the strongest possible terms, the brutal mass murder of eight people that took place in Pienaar. This act is senseless and barbaric. We call on the law enforcement agencies to track and arrest the perpetrators of this deed, so that they can face the full might of the law. They must receive the harshest possible punishment ever; in fact, they must rot in jail", said MEC Masilela.

According to reports, it is alleged, that the barbaric and fatal incident occurred during the early hours of Saturday, 11 January 2025. This incident has brought the issue of compliance by liquor outlets to the fore. The time of the incident, according to reports was outside operating hours, as per the license condition of the tavern in question.

"I have already instructed MER to urgently embark on a process of verifying information related to compliance matters, concerning the establishment in question. As per the mandate of the Department, this process will focus primarily on verifying and reviewing whether the outlet has contravened any of its licensing conditions. We commit to take strong actions against the tavern, should it be confirmed that there were contraventions. We remain committed to ensure accountability; our action will also send a strong message to other tavern owners that if you do not comply, the consequences will be calamitous", exclaimed a livid Ms. Masilela.

MEC Masilela has also conveyed her heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, friends and the community of Pienaar.

"Our prayers are with the bereaved families during this trying time. May the souls of the departed rest in eternal peace", said the MEC.

"What is even more worrisome, this horrific incident follows hot on the heels of the historic Provincial Liquor Indaba that we hosted last year. The Liquor Indaba was a vital step towards enhancing our engagement with the liquor industry, with a view to foster a more sustainable and responsible liquor sector that not only supports economic growth but also prioritises the health and safety of our communities. As a shareholder of the Mpumalanga Economic Regulator, the DEDT is committed to fostering a sustainable and responsible liquor industry that contributes positively to both the economy and the well-being of our communities", concluded MEC Masilela.

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Issued by the Department of Economic Development and Tourism

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Notes to Editors:

The Department of Economic Development and Tourism, under the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, is mandated to stimulate economic growth and development in the Province, so as to create sustainable and decent employment, economic transformation and to alleviate poverty. The Department has three (3) Public Entities; namely, Mpumalanga Economic Growth Agency (MEGA), Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), and Mpumalanga Economic Regulator (MER), to which it has delegated some of its constitutionally-mandated functions. These functions relate to: trade and investment promotion; funding of SMMEs; tourism growth and development; tourism marketing; regulation of the gambling and liquor industries, including collection of gambling levies and liquor license fees, amongst others.

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