



MEDIA STATEMENT

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All Media Houses

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PREMIER NDLOVU COMMENDS THE ARREST OF SUSPECTS LINKED TO ILLEGAL MINING AT MASHOBOTO

Mpumalanga Premier, Mr Mandla Ndlovu, has commended the South African Police Services (SAPS) for the arrest of nine (9) suspects linked to illegal mining at Mashoboto, outside Mbombela.

The arrest is an outcome of intensified measures of Operation Vala Umgodi, established by SAPS to clamp down illegal mining activities in the country. An exchange of gunfire among rival groups of illegal miners, the Zama zamas was reported on Wednesday, leading to an interruption of traffic flow on the R539 Schoemanskloof road.

Premier Ndlovu says the arrest will restore order in the area, along the road that is essential for the economic growth of the province. "Illegal mining is not only a threat to the safety of our communities but their livelihoods too. The arrest of the Zama zamas will restore order, and allow the movement of people and goods, without fear," the Premier stressed.

The R539 road links travellers with the N4 road, which is an essential road infrastructure of the Mpumalanga province, leading to the Gauteng province and two neighbouring countries, of Mozambique and eSwatini. It is a catalyst of the province's economy through transportation of logistics and goods, as well as tourism areas, worth million of rands monthly. "The gun battle which ensued in that area, fighting for control, held our economy at ransom. By arresting the suspects, the multi-disciplinary team, led by our Provincial Commissioner of the Police, Lieutenant General Apathia Modise, has done a sterling job, and we are proud of them," the Premier emphasised.

The Premier urges communities to report illegal mining activities to the police, in areas where it is detected. He says through Operation Vala Umgodi, SAPS has waged a war of clamping down many illegal activities in areas where such activities are identified.

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Issued by the Mpumalanga Provincial Government

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