Democratic Alliance speech by

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#GPSOPA: Beyond Broken Promises, a Path to a Safer Future in Gauteng

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**Madam Speaker,**

Gauteng, the economic heart of our nation, is under siege. Crime casts a long shadow, eroding our sense of safety, hindering investment, and stifling the dreams of our citizens. From violent robberies to brazen hijackings, from petty theft to devastating gender-based violence (GBV), residents live in constant fear.

Premier Panyaza Lesufi began his last SOPA by highlighting that the focus during this 6th administration was on fighting crime with the five-year Gauteng Policing Plan and increasing resources to our police stations to fight crime. He went on to report that the panic buttons promised in his 2023 SOPA have been rolled out. But this, as we know, is not true. Why would the Premier only inform Gauteng citizens on Monday (twelve months later) that they can download the e-panic button app on their mobile phones if this security measure is fully operational?

Surely, this is a hint that the Premier's pledges are impractical and unattainable and, despite his denials, cannot be fully implemented because they are unrealistic.

**Honourable Members, let us remember some of the horror stories over the past 12 months:**

* Weekly killings in Riverlea, Eldorado Park, and Westbury are due to gangsterism.
* Two boys were mutilated in Soweto, and a girl's vagina was cut in Tembisa.
* An Angelo explosion due to illegal mining killed 17 people.
* A woman was murdered at the same spot as her mother years before.
* Four gunmen were robbing people in peak-time traffic near this house.

**Madam Speaker,** these are real-life incidents and merely a drop in the ocean compared to all the incidents that transpired over the past 12 months. They do not paint a picture of a province fighting crime, but one that has lost the fight against crime.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) remains concerned about the legitimacy of the Crime Prevention Safety Wardens and the training they received. We cannot have a situation where 7,000 crime wardens are appointed to certify documents while criminals roam the streets freely. While the internal fights between Premier Lesufi and the Minister for Police about the legitimacy of the wardens and the power struggle between Premier Lesufi and the MMC for Community Safety in the city of Johannesburg over CCTV cameras continue, the residents of Gauteng continue to live in fear.

Premier Lesufi boasts about the drones, yet this is nothing, but another lie that was sold to the hopeless residents living in fear. It was repeated as a success story in SOPA this year. It was less than two weeks ago when we were informed in the committee meeting for Community Safety that there would no longer be 170 drones but that there were only sufficient funds for 30. We went from 3,000 drones during the 2023 SOPA to 170 and now finally 30 in a matter of 12 months, from one SOPA in 2023 to the next SOPA in 2024.

The DA demands tangible proof of action on safety promises. Where are the drones, panic buttons, CCTV cameras, and extra vehicles?

The DA has visited all 143 police stations across the province, and we have been unable to trace any of these promises made. However, we do have a needs and priorities list that we are willing to share. This list will assist the province in allocating the correct resources to where they are needed.

But today is not just about doom and gloom. As a house, we can reach one agreement: fighting crime should be a priority. During the 2024 SOPA, Premier Lesufi proved to the residents of Gauteng why this should be the last SOPA filled with empty promises we should ever listen to. It is time to vacate the seat and allow the DA to implement its plans for combating crime.

The DA, through its manifesto, offers a bold and comprehensive plan to wrestle back control of our streets and rebuild a Gauteng where people feel safe and secure. We will start fixing and addressing the basics by strengthening law enforcement and addressing the root causes of crime.

**Madam Speaker,**

This is not about statistics; it's about lives and dreams. The DA offers a long-term, collaborative plan to work with communities, civil society, and other stakeholders to build a safer Gauteng where fear gives way to hope and insecurity to opportunity. Let's countdown to May 29th for the DA to implement these solutions and create a Gauteng filled with hope and opportunity.

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