

Democratic Alliance speech by

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What Premier Lesufi did not tell us about Gauteng residents' lives

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Madam Speaker,

The Premier, during his 2024 SOPA, said that "fighting crime is our apex priority, which commands our urgent attention as the provincial government. I wish to reassure the people of our province that we will continue to ramp up measures to drastically reduce crimes." This, of course, was not the first time that he used the word "apex" to amplify his pledge to fight crime.

However, as a resident of Ekurhuleni, I am disheartened because I have reached a point where I don't believe a single word that comes out of our Honourable Premier's mouth. Tembisa South Police Station ranks among the top 30 worst-performing stations for murder, while Tembisa Rabasotho ranks high for rape. This has been the case at both stations for a few years. How is this possible if, indeed, crime is a priority for the Gauteng government? And if the Crime Prevention Wardens are as efficient as the Premier believes, why are we seeing a surge in violent crimes in this municipality?

Two weeks ago, the community of Norkem Park, Birchleigh, and its surroundings were bombarded with gunshots from 19:00 until 21:00 pm. Neighbours found stray bullets in their homes, including an elderly couple who found a bullet between them in their bed when they woke up in the morning. The police were notified about the suspected perpetrators, but the community was shocked to learn that no arrests were made. According to the police, the perpetrators were warned about firing shots in a residential area. The shots were so loud that it felt as if the shooters were standing in my garden. Surely, this is a clear example of poor policing.

I found it interesting that the Premier suggested we update our vocabulary by calling hostels family units. If I may ask the Premier, when were they developed into such? Go to the Actonville hostel now, and you will find sewage that has forced its way into people's homes. These people do not enjoy the benefits of a family home. Instead, they live in deplorable conditions. The residents are fully grown men who live in groups; the toilets do not flush, the showers are not functional, and the doors to their rooms are nothing more than curtains. So, contrary to the lie told in the Lord's house, hostels remain hostels.

The Premier talks about Townships, Informal Settlements, and Hostels (TISH), but the communities of Tembisa are not feeling it. Instead of highlighting TISH successes, the Premier has extended his plan to the CBDs. There is more to cleaning CBD's than just Carleton Centre. Littering needs to be cleared, dustbins need to be erected, potholes need to be repaired, and bylaws need to be enforced.

This filthiness is the one that deters investors from investing in our cities. When tourists know how high the crime is in our cities, they do not come to Gauteng.

Further compounding this is the failure to make infrastructure work in our province. On 19 July 2023, Bree Street exploded, and to date, such an important street is still not repaired and opened. This government is sabotaging the economic development of the City of Johannesburg. The city roads are busy and closing one more street increases congestion.

The Premier plans to build hospitals within the province but is not talking about how Kempton Park Hospital was abandoned, and to date, there is no plan for what will happen to the structure. This is problematic because Tembisa Hospital is facing significant strain, and Zamakohle Hospital, despite being a helpful ally, is unable to alleviate all the pressure. The less said about E-health the better: it has been tabled since 2014, and it seems to be going nowhere slowly.

Furthermore, I am concerned about how the Premier plans to activate the Bana Pele Programme, which has, for the past eight years, failed to use funds meant for dignity packs, school uniforms, and food parcels. The funding model for these programmes is still a concern.

In previous SOPAs, Premier Lesufi has talked about substance abuse and how drugs are ravaging our communities. I thought the Premier would have updated Gauteng residents on how many people have been assisted by his programmes.

Madam Speaker, it is shocking that the Premier missed an opportunity to apologise to the NPOs in Gauteng and acknowledge the hardships they endured. I suggest initiating the adjudication of NPO funding earlier in September this year, following the lead of the National Social Development and Western Cape, where the process kicks off during the same month. Consider the situation of an NPO closing down, affecting its employees and beneficiaries all within Gauteng. The R500 million in the Treasury could have been better used to serve the vulnerable, who are solely dependent on the NPOs for social services and survival.

Thank you!

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