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ANDREW WHITFIELD, MP
SHADOW MINISTER OF POLICE

19 April 2024

The Hon. Gen. Bheki Cele, MP
Minister of Police

Per e-mail: GaehlerSMK@saps.gov.za; PhokaneN@saps.gov.za

Dear Sir,

THE MURDER OF EMILIO HUTCHINSON AND RISING VIOLENT CRIME IN NELSON MANDELA BAY

1. It is clear violent crime in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (“**NMB**”) has reached crisis levels. The recent reports of the senseless murders of three-year old Emilio Hutchinson, Ms Ellen Hutchinson, and Mr Claude Thomas in Helenvale, Gqeberha, are as shocking as they are tragic, forming part of an escalating pattern of unchecked criminality in the municipality.
2. According to these reports, the murders are under currently investigation by the provincial anti-gang unit, although no arrests have been made to date.
3. As you well know, the level of violent crime in NMB has increased significantly over the past several years with the murder rate in the area increasing by over 40% over the last four years. Despite this, the area has witnessed a diminishing SAPS complement over the same period from 18,652 officers in 2018/2019 to 16,410 officers at the end of last year.
4. You will recall that I wrote to your Ministry in October 2023 requesting an urgent intervention and the deployment of specialised SAPS resources in these vulnerable areas. Notwithstanding your undertaking of 29 December 2023, in response to my letter, that you would request the deployment of additional specialised units to the area, the residents of NMB remain under siege by armed gangs, owing directly to SAPS inaction.
5. In light of the above, we would inquire, as a matter of urgency:
 - 5.1. what progress has been made by the SAPS to deploy additional specialised units to NMB, as promised in your letter of 29 December 2023, and in particular to the northern areas of Gqeberha;

5.2. what steps the SAPS has taken, and is taking, to combat the rising levels of violent crime in NMB;
and

5.3. what steps are being taken to ensure that the SAPS complement in NMB is increased to a level capable of maintaining law and order.

6. We trust that you will consider this matter with the urgency it deserves and we await your responses hereto.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Whitfield', is written over a horizontal line.

Andrew Whitfield, MP
Shadow Minister of Police
Democratic Alliance