



EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
Member of the Provincial Legislature

Retief Odendaal, MPL
(Former Executive Mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay)

4 September 2025

To: The Honourable Professor Firoz Cachalia
Acting Minister of Police

Per email: BiyelaL@saps.gov.za,
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Dear Acting Minister Professor Cachalia,

RE: URGENT APPEAL REGARDING CRIME IN NELSON MANDELA BAY (NMB)

The scale and importance of the role to which you have been appointed cannot be understated
- I wish you well during your tenure.

I am writing to you today not only as the DA's mayoral candidate for, and former executive mayor of, NMB but as a concerned resident and a voice for the countless residents whose lives are being severely impacted by the escalating crime wave sweeping across our city. As we know, fighting crime is a national government function, so your intervention is absolutely imperative.

In May this year, Chief Whip of the Opposition in the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature, the Honourable Yusuf Cassim MPL, petitioned the National Assembly to investigate the rampant crime in NMB. Cassim appeared before the National Assembly's Police Portfolio Committee and presented a shuddering report on the bloodshed occurring in our city. A resultant [report](#) adopted by the Portfolio Committee (see Annexure A) outlines recommendations to deal with several major identified issues.

Acting Minister, I insist that you review the recommendations in this report, as it relates to dealing with gangsterism, and implement them as soon as possible. In addition to these recommendations, there are other key areas of concern which require your direct intervention:

- Rampant vandalism and theft of municipal infrastructure is leading to service delivery collapse. This has a direct impact on residents and businesses and contributes to the unemployment crisis facing our city as businesses pack up and move elsewhere or execute mass retrenchments.
- A spate of kidnappings have struck fear into the hearts of residents across the city. While the recent arrest of 9 suspects is encouraging, the reality is that these kidnapping syndicates are highly organised and can only be dismantled by disrupting the entire kingpin hierarchy.

These issues are directly affecting service delivery and compromise public safety infrastructure. Residents are left feeling vulnerable. These are not isolated events; they are symptoms of a systemic policing breakdown that demands your immediate attention.

These organised crime syndicates are sophisticated and well-funded, often operating way beyond what the current SAPS infrastructure can handle. We cannot allow these groups to operate with impunity and hold our city hostage. A new approach is desperately needed and I am confident that your leadership will be able to create the change we need.

Two weeks ago, the DA tabled a motion in the Eastern Cape Legislature that would see the establishment of a permanent 24-hour joint operations centre in NMB led by the Hawks, SAPS, Metro Police, and the NPA.

I respectfully urge you to support the establishment of this joint operations centre while also taking the following critical steps:

1. The SAPS in NMB must be better resourced. This includes providing the necessary personnel, modern equipment, and advanced training to effectively combat both common and organised crimes.
2. Improve and scrutinise the capacity of crime intelligence so that we can get ahead of, and

collapse, crime syndicates before they infiltrate our communities.

3. Foster better collaboration with private security to bolster law enforcement reach and information channels. The recent kidnapping-related arrests were only made possible with the support of private security.
4. I appeal to you to authorise and assist in the establishment of specialised units dedicated to tackling organised crime, particularly gangsterism, vandalism and cable theft. These units, with their focused expertise and resources, are essential to tackling these crime syndicates.

The safety and security of our city are non-negotiable. I am confident that with your support and collaboration, we can implement the necessary changes to make NMB a safer place for all.

I would value an opportunity to meet with you here in NMB at which point we can discuss the aforementioned issues and possibly conduct oversight at key sites. Please could your office provide some available dates for this engagement.

Yours Sincerely,



Retief Odendaal, MPL

Constituency Head: Southern and Western Suburbs NMB