



Provincial Legislature
Private Bag x0051 or
Independence Ave
Bhisho, 5605

EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
Member of the Provincial Legislature

Retief Odendaal, MPL
(Democratic Alliance Spokesperson on COGTA)



Tel: –
Fax: –
Cell: 082-462 0668
e-mail: retiefodendaal@telkom.sa.net

27 July 2026

To: The Honourable Professor Firoz Cachalia
Acting Minister of Police

Dear Honourable Minister Cachalia

**RE: URGENT FOLLOW-UP: REQUEST FOR NATIONAL INTERVENTION ON ESCALATING
CRIME AND GANGSTERISM IN NELSON MANDELA BAY**

It has now been more than ten months since I wrote to you requesting your urgent intervention in the escalating crime and gangsterism that continue to hold the residents of Nelson Mandela Bay to ransom.

In September last year, I formally appealed for direct national intervention in Nelson Mandela Bay and requested your personal engagement and oversight in response to the city's worsening crime crisis. I also requested a meeting with you in Gqeberha. While your office acknowledged receipt of my correspondence, I have received no substantive response.

This lack of engagement is deeply concerning, particularly given the seriousness of the crisis and the clear directives already adopted by both Parliament and the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature.

In July last year, Parliament adopted a report arising from a Democratic Alliance petition submitted by our then Shadow MEC for Community Safety, and current Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Yusuf Cassim MP.

The report called for urgent national intervention to address the gang violence crisis in the Northern Areas of Nelson Mandela Bay.

Among its key resolutions, Parliament directed the South African Police Service (SAPS) to urgently address the collapse of the Anti-Gang Unit and Crime Intelligence capacity in the Metro through strengthened national oversight and regular progress reporting.

These were not recommendations alone; they were formal resolutions of Parliament reflecting the severity of the crisis confronting our communities.

In November last year, I joined Yusuf Cassim MP and Democratic Alliance Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Police, Ian Cameron MP, on oversight inspections of key SAPS units across Nelson Mandela Bay.

What we found revealed a stark disconnect between Parliament's directives and the reality confronting police officers on the ground.

Critical policing units remain severely under-resourced. The Anti-Gang Unit continues to operate with an inadequate number of vehicles and detectives. Crime Intelligence capacity remains dangerously constrained. The Flying Squad and K9 Units - both essential components of rapid response operations and drug interdiction - are functioning under conditions that severely undermine effective policing.

In December 2025, the Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature took a further important step by adopting a motion calling for the establishment of a permanent, 24-hour Joint Operations Centre in Nelson Mandela Bay. The purpose of this centre is to coordinate SAPS, Metro Police, the Hawks, and the National Prosecuting Authority through real-time intelligence sharing and integrated operational command.

This resolution complements Parliament's earlier directives.

Together, they provide a clear roadmap for intervention: rebuild specialised policing capacity, restore effective Crime Intelligence, and establish permanent joint operational coordination in the province's city most severely affected by organised crime.

Despite these clear mandates, there have been no meaningful commitments regarding the resources required, deployment timelines, or oversight mechanisms necessary to give effect to Parliament's resolutions and the Provincial Legislature's motion. More importantly, there has been little visible improvement on the ground.

In January this year, you visited Nelson Mandela Bay to engage stakeholders on the worsening crime situation. While that engagement was welcomed, our communities continue to face an increasingly severe security crisis.

The statistics paint a devastating picture. Between 2019 and 2025, more than 1,000 people were killed in gang-related violence in the Eastern Cape. In just the past two years, 39 innocent children lost their lives.

For the period January to March this year, KwaZakhele Police Station in Nelson Mandela Bay recorded the highest number of murders of any police station in South Africa. Other Nelson Mandela Bay police stations - including New Brighton, Walmer and KwaNobuhle - also ranked among the twenty worst stations nationally for murder.

In the Northern Areas of Nelson Mandela Bay alone, over a six-year period, SAPS made 181 arrests in connection with 142 gang-related murder cases. These figures demonstrate both the scale and persistence of organised criminal activity that continues to plague our communities.

This is not normal. It is unacceptable that law-abiding residents are effectively imprisoned in their homes while heavily armed criminal gangs wage running gun battles in our streets.

The solutions are well known. What has been lacking is the political will to implement them. Parliament's resolutions are gathering dust while criminals continue to terrorise our communities.

When President Ramaphosa deployed the South African National Defence Force to the Western Cape and Gauteng to address gang violence, the Eastern Cape was overlooked despite facing the same scourge. It was the Democratic Alliance that stood alongside residents, marched through the Northern Areas, and demanded equal protection for our communities.

While the eventual deployment of the army brought temporary relief, soldiers cannot resolve a policing failure. Sustainable safety requires a criminal justice system that is properly resourced, intelligence-driven, and capable of dismantling organised criminal networks.

Nelson Mandela Bay does not require further assessments of the problem. It requires decisive action: fully resourced Anti-Gang Units, restored Crime Intelligence capacity, and a permanent Joint Operations Centre capable of coordinating law enforcement agencies and disrupting organised criminal networks before more innocent lives are lost.

I therefore once again request your direct intervention. Specifically, I request that you provide clarity on:

- the implementation of Parliament's resolutions relating to gang violence in Nelson Mandela Bay;
- the timelines for restoring specialised policing capacity, including the Anti-Gang Unit, Crime Intelligence, the Flying Squad and K9 Units;
- the establishment and operationalisation of the permanent 24-hour Joint Operations Centre; and
- the measures your department will implement to ensure effective oversight, accountability and regular reporting on progress.

I remain committed to using every available avenue to ensure that Nelson Mandela Bay receives the policing support it has long been promised and so urgently requires.

Public safety is the foundation upon which economic recovery, investment and job creation depend.

Without restoring law and order, our city cannot realise its full potential or provide residents with the safe communities they deserve.

I trust that this matter will receive your urgent attention, and I look forward to your substantive response.

Yours sincerely,



Retief Odendaal, MPL
Constituency Head: Southern and Western Suburbs NMB

Annexure A



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,
DavidsB@saps.gov.za,
Mlandusa@saps.gov.za,
NkabineCM@saps.gov.za,
MthembuCU@saps.gov.za

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