

**TUESDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2017**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**THE RECENT MURDERS IN LUSAKA PROVINCE**

**The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr Kampyongo):** Mr Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity that you have given me to render a ministerial statement on the recent murders reported in Lusaka Province, which prompted Hon. Elizabeth Phiri, Member of Parliament for Kanyama to raise a point of order.

Sir, allow me to take this opportunity to address the point of order by starting with an assessment of the prevailing security situation in the country over the last few years, before I address the specific point of order on the recent murders reported in Lusaka Province. It is important to place the recent murders within the overall security situation context prevailing in the Republic of Zambia to avoid inappropriate responses.

Mr Speaker, the security situation in the Republic of Zambia over the last four years has been stable and peaceful. A number of serious crimes have, however, occurred and most of them have been reported to the Zambia Police Service, which maintains records of reported crimes on a daily basis. Close examination of the crime statistics for the period, 2013 to 2016, shows that the crime trend remained the same in the sense that incidents of crime continues to decline though slowly and uneven. From 88,384 crimes reported in 2013 to 85,692 and 87,432 reported in the 2014, 2015 and 2016, respectively.

Sir, the most serious crimes prevalent in the country also remain the same. They include; assaults occasioning actual bodily harm, thefts, aggravated robberies, stock theft, murders and thefts of motors vehicles in that order, respectively.

Mr Speaker, the prevalence of crime also continues to be closely related to the population distribution with the most populated districts and provinces recording incidents of crime more than the least populated districts and provinces. Overall, the incidents of crime are on the decline.

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Sir, let me now address the question of the recent murders reported in Lusaka Province. Since 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2017, Lusaka has reported sixteen murders and eight aggravated robberies cases. With regard to the arrests, five and eight suspects have so far been arrested for the murder and aggravated robbery cases, respectively. However, investigations into these barbaric crimes will continue. During the same period in 2016, Lusaka Province had recorded about nineteen murders and 146 aggravated robberies. On the basis of these statistics, there is a relative decline in the incidences of murder and aggravated robberies.

Mr Speaker, measures taken to address the incidents of crime in Lusaka Province, which will also help to enhance security throughout the country in all provinces, are as follows:

- (a) enhanced foot and motorised patrols by our officers in various communities, especially, those that have been prone to these crimes;
- (b) increased police presence in the densely populated townships;
- (c) enhanced community team mobilisation to prevent and arrest perpetrators of crime;
- (d) enforcement of the timely closure of entertainment and drinking places;
- (e) enhanced sensitisation of the population on personal security through meetings with community and civic leaders, radio and television programmes; and
- (f) there is an offer of K50,000 reward to any person that may provide information leading to the arrest of those involved in the recent murders.

Mr Speaker, before I conclude, I would like to appeal to all members of the public and indeed, hon. Members of this august House to work with and support the Zambia Police Service in the fight against crime. This is very important as this task cannot be left to the Zambia Police Service

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alone. Public participation and involvement is essential because police officers cannot be everywhere at all times.

Sir, let me also take this opportunity to appeal to organisations and individuals that organise public gatherings to comply with the provisions of the Public Order Act, as failure to do so can be fatal as we just witnessed yesterday.

Sir, yesterday, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2017, for example, eight people died, six adult females, one adult male and one juvenile male, while twenty-eight were seriously injured in a stampede at the meeting which was convened by some church organisation, where some food hampers were promised. This meeting was held at the Olympic Youth Development Centre (OYDC) here in Lusaka. Our sympathies go to the families of those who lost their beloved ones.

Mr Speaker, this unfortunate incident was partly due to failure to observe the provisions of the Public Order Act. The organisers began the programme earlier than indicated in their notification to the Zambia Police Service. As a result, public disorder occurred before the arrival of the police at the scheduled time.

Mr Speaker, the unfortunate incident at OYDC in Lusaka underscores the importance of complying with the provisions of the Public Order Act. Had it not been for the quick response by the Zambia Police, more people could have been injured and probably more lives would have been lost. I would, therefore, like to commend the Inspector-General of Police and his command for the quick response and for personally taking charge of the operation to restore order. The Zambia Police Service is still investigating the incident and the law shall certainly take its course once the investigations have been concluded.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.