

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**  
ON THE  
RISING CRIMINAL GANGS AND ACTIVITIES, FIRING RANGE IN CHALALA, AND  
ALLEGED SHOOTING OF STUDENT  
BY THE HON. MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS, MR KAMPYONGO

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to you for according me the opportunity to issue a ministerial statement on the rising number of gangs in some parts of the country. Allow me to also comment on the firing range in Chalala area of Lusaka District, and the alleged shooting of a student at Lusaka Apex Medical University.

Sir, my Government is extremely concerned with the rising number of criminal gangs and crime in some parts of the country, especially in the Copperbelt Province in general, Kitwe in particular. Criminal gangs have largely been formed by young people aged between nineteen and thirty-four years. In the last few months, gangs have been attacking innocent citizens, injuring them and stealing their personal properties such as hand bags, money and cell phones. To contain the situation, the Zambia Police Service put in place a number of measures including the following:

- (a) established a taskforce to deal with the rising number of gangs and criminal activities in Kitwe;
- (b) intensified motorised and foot patrols; and
- (c) put public sensitisation programmes , especially through Radio Ichengelo , on the dangers of criminal gangs, importance of reporting crimes to the police and encouraging members of the public to identify and report to the police, youths involved in criminal activities and suppliers of illicit drugs in their communities. Members of the public have also been encouraged to form and participate in crime-prevention committees and associations within their communities.

Sir, the public sensitisation programmes have been very successful in fighting crime in the communities. Their success is evident from the support of the stakeholders, including the media. Radio Ichengelo, for example, has since offered the Zambia Police Service one hour free airtime per week for the public sensitisation programmes on crime and crime prevention.

Mr Speaker, the measures taken by the police to arrest the crime wave in Kitwe have so far resulted in the apprehension of sixty-six people for various gang-related offences ranging from aggravated robberies, two abductions, unlawful wounding causing grievous bodily harm, and conduct likely to cause breach of peace. There are also sixteen gang-related cases before the courts of law in Kitwe. About twelve of these are in subordinate courts, while four cases are in the High Court. The robust response to gang crimes by the police has resulted in drastic reduction in gang-related crimes in Kitwe. Community sensitisation coupled with vigorous police patrols have helped reduce drastically, the gang-related crimes.

Mr Speaker, given the success of the public sensitisation programmes in helping to curb gang-related crimes, allow me to appeal to members of the public to stay calm because the Zambia Police Service is working hard to rid our communities of all crime activities and to bring to book, the perpetrators of these crimes.

Members of the public should support the Zambia Police Service by reporting any suspicious persons and activities to them. In the same vein, members of the public should, at all times, desist from taking the law into their own hands. Instead, they should exercise maximum restraint and allow the law enforcement officers to do their work professionally.

Sir, allow me to take this opportunity to commend the Zambia Police Service Command for the successful operations that have resulted in the arrest of some perpetrators of these crimes. The operations have also helped restore public security. Overall, the security situation in the country remains stable. Members of the public should, therefore, continue going about their business normally.

Mr Speaker, I must also appeal to parents, the church leadership and school authorities to offer guidance to young people and help them desist from engaging in criminal activities. We must all work together and encourage young people to focus on their education and acquisition of life skills for them to be productive and youthful law abiding citizens of this great country.

Sir, allow me to now comment on the firing range in Chalala area of Lusaka District and the alleged shooting of a student at the Kasama Road Campus of the Apex Medical University. Preliminary investigations show that the undeveloped land opposite the Kasama Road Campus of the Lusaka Apex Medical University is used as a firing range by the Zambia Army. On the basis of the location, where the student is said to have been standing at the time of the alleged shooting, it is possible that the said student could have been shot and caught by a stray bullet from the range.

Mr Speaker, investigations into the matter are still on-going. Until the facts are established, it would be irresponsible and premature to draw any conclusions. We must, therefore, guard against speculation and misinformation. In the absence of a conclusive report on the alleged shooting, it is difficult to suggest what should be done to avoid similar incidents in the future.

Sir, the Zambia Police Service has, nevertheless, engaged the Zambia Army on the possibility of relocating the firing range to a less densely populated area. The Government regrets the death of the student at The Lusaka Apex University.

I thank you, Sir.