

Mr Speaker Sir.

I wish to thank you for according me this opportunity to make a Ministerial Statement on the politically motivated violence that took place in Bweengwa, Southern Province on 13th February 2016 at about 18.00hrs.

Mr Speaker

The facts of this unfortunate incident are as follows;

- 1) His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia, Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu was in Southern Province to check on developmental projects. On Saturday 13th February 2016, the President addressed a public rally at Bweengwa Primary School, where a large number of people turned up.

- 2) The President's Public meeting ended peacefully just before 18 hours and the Presidential Entourage left for Itezhi-tezhi.
- 3) Shortly before the end of the President's public meeting, the police received information to the effect that, unknown persons believed to be UPND supporters had blocked the Niko-Monze Road which leads out of Bweengwa.
- 4) To protect the people that had attended the President's Public Meeting who were using the Monze-Niko Road, The police had to escort them in a convoy.
- 5) As a result, the venue of the President's Public meeting remained with only a few Police Officers, Who had to ensure the safety of public property and officers that had to clear the venue.

- 6) Realizing that the people leaving the public meeting were protected by the Police, the suspected UPND supporters turned violent on the public officers that had to clear the venue of the President's meeting.
- 7) The suspected UPND supporters chanted slogans, while throwing stones at the Police and Public workers that were clearing the said venue.
- 8) The few police officers left at the site of the public meeting were overwhelmed and requested for reinforcement. Fortunately the reinforcement arrived at the scene in good time and managed to contain the situation.
- 9) By the time the police contained the situation, three police officers and some

members of the ZANIS team had been injured, while four (4) Government motor vehicles were also damaged.

Mr Speaker,

● The matter is currently under investigations, and I would like to assure this August House that, the Government is doing everything possible to bring the perpetrators of this violence to book. The kind of political violence witnessed at Bweengwa is uncalled for in a democratic country. It should accordingly be

● condemned by all well-meaning Zambians, because it has no place in a democratic society.

Sir, The Zambia Police has deployed more officers to the province to ensure that, all our people are protected from violence being instigated by misguided political activists. The Police Service is also currently conducting training for all the officers to ensure that, they are professional in policing public gatherings.

Mr Speaker,

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to urge all political party leaders to ensure that their members conduct their political activities peacefully. Democracy demands that we promote and protect the fundamental freedoms of association, assembly and speech. The Police shall deal very firmly with cases of political violence without fear or favour. All political activists who use violence

as a means of advancing their political goals must take this timely warning, as my Government is not going to condone political violence.

● Thank you **Mr Speaker**

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