

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ON

POLICE SHOOTINGS IN LUSAKA AND NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES AND PHASE
II OF MOBILE ISSUANCE OF NATIONAL REGISTRATION CARDS

BY THE

MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (MR KAMPYONGO), MP

Mr Speaker, I wish to thank you for this opportunity you have given me to issue a ministerial statement on incidences involving police shootings in Lusaka and the North-Western Province. I also want to take advantage of this opportunity to give a brief updates to the House and the nation on Phase II of the mobile issuance of National Registration Cards (NRCs).

Sir, let me bring to your attention the background of the events that led to the violence which occurred at Kamanga Police Post. The public may wish to note that the riot started in the early hours of 27th September, 2020. This was triggered by an attempt by some police reserve officers and members of the neighbourhood watch, who went to close Flavour Night Club which was reported to have been operating beyond the stipulated hours.

The brief facts of the matter are that in the early hours of 27th September, 2020 around 0100 hours, a night club operating under the name Flavour Night Club in Kamanga Compound was reported to have been operating contrary to the Presidential directives that bars should only open from Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1800 hours to 2300 hours.

Sir, as a combined team of police and reserve officers and the neighbourhood watch tried to close the premises, patrons rose against them and in the process of restoring order, a stray bullet caught Timothy Zulu aged 17 years of Kamanga Compound, who later died. This unfortunate

incident resulted in riotous behaviour by the angry mob, which later damaged Kamanga Police Post and two police motor vehicles. One officer who had been assigned to pick up the body of the deceased was also injured in the process.

Further, the rioters facilitated the escape of eleven suspects; ten males and one female, who were facing various criminal charges. Out of the eleven escapees, two have since been re-arrested and detained at Chelstone Police Station. Investigations were immediately instituted. The police reserve officer involved in the shooting of the juvenile has since been arrested and charged with murder. Six rioters have also been arrested and they will also appear before the courts of law. Investigations in this matter are ongoing.

Mr Speaker, with regards to the shooting incident, which occurred on the 26th of September, 2020, in Mwinilunga District, I wish to inform this august House that prior to the shooting incident on Monday, 21st September, 2020, the Zambia police Service in Mwinilunga District received a report of theft from a salesman at a place called 'Just Chris Enterprise' in Mwinilunga District. Brief facts of the matter are that on the 20th September, 2020, a male suspect aged 21 of Kabanda Compound in Mwinilunga District allegedly stole one crate of castle lager beer valued at K286 from Just Chris Enterprise outlet located at Mwinilunga Town Centre.

Sir, the following on the 21st September, 2020, the suspect was apprehended by the owner of the Just Chris Enterprise who handed him over to his salesman so that he could be taken to the police station. The suspect appeared to be in a drunken state and when they arrived at the police station, officers opted not to detain the suspect. Instead, the suspect was made to rest on the front desk bench until he could sober-up. A wife to the complainant who is also a police officer requested that the suspect be released and asked to pay back the money later. Around 1700 hours, the suspect was allowed to go home and subject was seen walking towards the main road along Lunga River Bridge.

Mr Speaker, on the 22nd September, 2020 around 0500 hours, the police officer, who was walking towards the police station from guard duties in town saw a man lying down on the road side near the police station. He quickly alerted officers at the front desk, who identified the man

as Mr 'Mr Felix Mang'watu,' unfortunately, the man dead. Officers picked up the body and deposited it at Mwinilunga District Hospital Mortuary. The police have since instituted investigations into the suspicious death of Mr Mwang'watu and so far, one suspect is in police custody helping with investigations. Further, the post-mortem was conducted and the results have been released in readiness for the court process.

Mr Speaker, on Friday, 25th of September, 2020, after the post-mortem was conducted and in the process of winding up the post-mortem procedure, an irate mob from Kabanda Compound storms the mortuary and picked up the body for burial. The unruly mob dragged the coffin towards the market, where 'Just Chris Enterprise and Guest House' belonging to the same businessman are allocated. The mob damaged and looted the properties. The police fought running battles with the mob.

Sir, the action taken by the members of the public to forcefully grab the body from the mortuary culminated in two serious confrontations between members of the public and the police. This break-down of order put the lives of innocent members of the public and that of the police officers at risk. In the quest to restore order as per operation procedure, police fired warning shots to try and restrain the uncompromising rioters, who were also wielding all sorts of weapons. Despite the warning shots, the rioters continued with their aggressive behaviour which prompted the police to fire at their aggressive ring leaders with intent to name. Regrettably, a man by the name of Davis Ifota Kuwema aged 18 of Kabanda Compound in Mwinilunga District was caught by a bullet and lost his life.

Mr Speaker, in order to prevent further loss of life during such occurrences, the Government is implementing the following certain measures. With respect to Mwinilunga, the Zambia Police Service in Mwinilunga District is:

- (a) in the process of expanding its establishment following the growth of the district due to mining activities;

- (b) procurement of specialised equipment for effective crowd control and management;
- (c) the Zambia Police Service has formed standby units in all the ten provinces that are undergoing in-service training at Lilayi Police College. The police will now employ a surge strategy that requires stand-by units to temporarily flag areas where there is public disorder;
- (d) conducting routine station lectures on the use of fire arms and parades to assess the ability fo officer to handle fire arms before being assigned duties; and
- (e) through the Community Crime Prevention Unity (CCPU), the Zambia Police Service has continued to sensitise the public on the importance of maintaining law and order.

Mr Speaker, I wish to also confirm that the Council Chairperson for Mufumbwe District Council was arrested for assaulting the Council Secretary of the same council however the suspect has been released on police bond pending court appearance.

Mr Speaker, allow me to address some concerns raised by certain sections of society with regards to the issuance of National Registration Cards (NRCs) in the Second Phase of the exercise particularly, in Lusaka and the Southern provinces.

Mr Speaker, mobile registration begun on a good note after deploying the teams. The Ministry of Home Affairs is working closely with the Provincial Administrations and District Administration who are the custodian of the mobile registration time table.

Mr Speaker, the Government has noted with great concern that some hon. Members of Parliament and political party agents are not collaborate with District Administration Offices and thereby making the work of the officers very difficult. The challenges being faced by the officers include, ferrying of applicants.

Mr Speaker, applicants are being ferried from areas yet to be visited by mobile teams to current centres. This situation is inconveniencing the public and the officers because instead of waiting in their local areas the people are made to camp at issuance centres. Some people are literally sleeping at issuance centres in most districts instead of waiting for officers to visit their areas. The officers cannot even sleep at night as queues in some areas and some cases form as early as 02 00 hours.

Mr Speaker, there has been heightened intimidation and harassment of officers by some hon. Members of Parliament, Councillors and party agents. For example, in Kanyama Constituency of Lusaka Province, the registration process was disrupted at some centre and officers were attacked by some suspected cadres. This is counterproductive and not necessary as information, inquiries or concerns pertaining to the exercise should be made to the District Commissioners at district level or the Permanent Secretary at provincial level or in indeed, the office of the Provincial hon. Ministers or the Office of the hon. Minister of Home Affairs. Further, law enforcement officers will be at hand to deal with the perpetrators.

Mr Speaker, the other challenges are allegations of people charging unsuspected members of the public. Some unscrupulous people are charging for affidavit forms and filling them in advance particularly in Lusaka District. This is not only acceptable, but illegal. I have instructed officers not to accept already completed forms. Therefore, I want to warn would be offenders that they will be brought to book.

Mr Speaker, the last challenge is the spreading of falsehoods. Some suspected political agents have been flooding communities spreading falsehoods about the exercise. They are telling people that the exercise will not be extended to all areas and that it will end before the expiry of the forty days. This has caused panic to the members of the public and has made people to be suspicious of the officers on the ground. Further, the same people are going round communities with loud speakers, announcing NRC messages when they are not Government official authorised to do so.

Mr Speaker, I wish to warn those spreading falsehoods that the law will take its course. In conclusion, may I take this opportunity to warn perpetrators of lawlessness that the Zambia Police Service will deal sternly with them and will not allow criminals to challenge the institution with impunity.

I wish to remind all citizens of the Republic of Zambia that Police Stations are not play grounds to harassment and intimidate officers and any disrespectful conduct towards the police by any individual will be met with the full wrath of the law.

Sir, to the Police Officers, I wish to warn them that no one is above the law and the Government will not shield them from justice when they choose to take with law unto their own hands. He/she will face the consequences individually the long arm of the law will visit you regardless of your position or status in the service. As officers, they are expected to follow laid-down procedures at all times when discharging duties. Further, they are required to exhibit high levels of professionalism and discipline when dealing with members of the public.

Mr Speaker, I thank you.