

MINISTERIALS STATEMENT
ON THE
ALLEGED RITUAL KILLINGS AND RIOTS IN MUMBWA DISTRICT
BY THE
THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND INTERNAL SECURITY (MR
MWIIMBU), MP

Madam Speaker, let me thank you for giving me the opportunity to deliver a ministerial statement, to update the nation on the event that happened in Mumbwa District, following suspected ritual killings of two persons.

Allow me in the first place, on behalf of the Government of Zambia and indeed on my own behalf, to sincerely express my deepest condolences to the families of the two men who were allegedly murdered by suspected ritual killers, and to the families of the other two persons who died following the riotous behaviour of the members of the community.

Madam Speaker, it is time for our country to take stock of what happened in Mumbwa District on Wednesday, 13th September, 2023. The nation, through different platforms, witnessed some of the most heinous acts in Mumbwa District. Life and decades of hard work burnt to the ground in a few hours. What happened in Mumbwa was strange and alien to our traditions. That behaviour we saw on Wednesday does not represent us as a peaceful people of Zambia as a whole, nor does it represent our good citizens of Mumbwa District.

Madam Speaker, the death of the four persons in Mumbwa District ranks among the crudest form of violence in the land. The riotous behaviour of some sections of society will not make this nation succumb to violence. We will use all means available to rid this country of such senseless acts that deprive our people of their rights and freedoms. Although the start of the riot was spontaneous, the subsequent acts of violence were calculated. This was just a pure act of criminality. The spate of violence in Mumbwa District was triggered by the alleged murder of two persons by suspected ritual killers.

Madam Speaker, let me give the brief facts about what occurred in Mumbwa District on 8th September, 2023. On 8th September, 2023 around 2200 hours, the body of Joseph Miyato aged twenty-six years, was found in the middle of a gravel road in his home compound of Kafwabi in Mumbwa District by passers-by, who later reported the matter to the Zambia Police Service in Mumbwa District. The body was open from the chest down to the groin, with the heart and private parts missing. The deceased was believed to have left home the previous day around 0600 hours, but never returned home. The police instituted investigations in the matter.

Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, 13th September, 2023, another body identified to be of Mwiya Kashweka, was found dumped in the same Kafwabi area by members of the public. The members of the public apprehended one person suspected to be behind the killing and handed him to the Zambia Police Service in Mumbwa District.

Madam Speaker, when word went around that one suspect in the ritual killing had been apprehended and handed to the Zambia Police Service, a mob assembled and demanded for instant mob justice. When the police refused to release the suspect, the mob became unruly and violent. In the process, the mob set ablaze the veterinary office, burning to ashes equipment and medicine.

Two motor vehicles that were parked at the police station after being involved in accidents were also destroyed. After this trail of destruction, the riotous group moved to town, where it looted a number of shops before attacking and killing a Tanzanian businessman, David Arnold Mwachiyoma, and a Zambian businessman Earnest Sikaonga at his lodge, which was also set ablaze. The businessmen were attacked and killed by the irate mob on suspicion that they were behind the alleged ritual killings.

Madam Speaker, the bodies of the two victims of the riotous behaviour have been deposited in Mumbwa District Hospital mortuary awaiting post-mortem. The Zambia Police Service has instituted investigations in the matter. Two suspects have been apprehended in connection with the suspected ritual killing and are helping the Zambia Police Service with investigations. In addition, more suspects and more persons have been apprehended for riotous behaviour and theft

in Mumbwa. We cannot have citizens behaving as if their choices have no consequences. Criminal behaviour literally arrived on people's doorsteps.

Madam Speaker, at this juncture, I also want to inform the nation that the looting has not just ended in Mumbwa, it has extended to other towns, including Itezhi-Tezhi, where last night, members of the public looted a number of premises as a result of what they allege had happened in Mumbwa.

Madam Speaker, the values and principles we aspire to uphold as a nation are under threat. We should all take an introspection as individuals and as social members of our communities. We cannot go on the path where members of the public take pleasure in taking the law into their own hands. This unacceptable behaviour must stop forthwith. One of the New Dawn Government's very first act signalled priority to restore order in the country, especially in public places, and to build public confidence in our law enforcement agencies. That passion is stronger today than ever. I urge all peace-loving Zambians to allow our law enforcement agencies to do their work. If we do not allow law enforcement agencies to do their work, innocent people can be targeted and be killed without any iota of evidence.

Madam Speaker, I understand the anger with the degree of crime that was recorded in Mumbwa prior to the riot. Suspected ritual killings, so foul and gruesome crime which occurred despite the fact that the crime brought high emotions in the community, there was no justification for the riotous behaviour displayed. Our people everywhere and Mumbwa in particular should have confidence in the institutions established to deal with crime. Your Government has unwavering determination to fight crime and we will do so passionately. So, no one should doubt this Government's determination to be tough and effective on crime. I have a very strong sense of optimism that the responsible majority of our people in this country believe our determination to fight crime and will give the Government chance to fight crime.

Madam Speaker, as an immediate measure to prevent further loss of life and property in Mumbwa district, we have beefed up the presence of our law enforcement officers, improved intelligence gathering and collaboration with other security wings. Additionally, active

investigations are under way to bring to book the perpetrators of the ritual killings and the other riotous individual to answer for their actions. Going forward, we shall continue sensitising communities on the importance of upholding law and order.

Madam Speaker, I thank you.
