

National Freedom Party: First party motion for 2015

Madam speaker

Honorable Members

All guests,

Following the recent release of the 2014/15 crime statistics by the South African Police Service, it is imperative for all of us as public representatives to take stock, assess the state of criminal activity in the country and determine if our legal framework and the criminal justice system adequately respond to this. As the National Freedom Party we do not believe the systems are tough enough on crime and we therefore believe changes need to be made to address this. These statistics indicate that our country is one of the most dangerous places to live in as criminal activity has increased to 2.2 million, a 0.09% increase from 2014. Honourable Members, we did not simply arrive at this point overnight, this is all a result of increasing criminal activity and our failure to face it head on. If any amongst us are in doubt about this, let us consider some of the facts:

- Over One hundred and Sixty One Thousand people were murdered in South Africa since 2004;

- 47% of all drug related crimes in the country occur in the Western Cape.
- 5900 crimes are reported by the SAPS everyday and
- Poor South Africans are most affected by crime as the statistics show that all 10 police stations that recorded the most murders over the past year were in townships.

It is disturbing that South Africans are now the most unsafe people on the planet. Each day, we all fear for our lives. Our murder rate is five times the world average. This year, the murder rate increased, with 49 people being killed each day. But perhaps the saddest result of this is that this culture of lawlessness and crime is being instilled in our children. According to these statistics, people under the age of 17 were responsible for 800 crimes in 2015. 49 of these were cases of murder. What kind of society have we become when our children can pick up weapons and take another person's life? This cannot be normal and we cannot sit back and do nothing; we need to save future generations by confronting these challenges now.

In what kind of society is it normal for one young person to rape and kill another young person? In our country, this is the norm. In 2013, Anene Booysen, a 17 year old girl was found by a security guard after she had been gang raped and murdered. Her murderers raped her, they cut open her stomach and threw her intestines of the ground next to

her body and left her there to die. Johannes Kana, a 21 year old was found guilty of her murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

As Africans, we hold a special place for elderly people in our communities. We turn to them as our source of strength and wisdom. But in today's day and age, there is attack on the elderly and even they are not safe from the hands of criminals. This year in April, we learned with great sadness that a nun was raped and killed in Sacred Heart Home in Ixopo. These tragedies shocked the nation. But sadly, it did not spur us into action because since then more women and children have been mercilessly raped and killed. The thought of life in prison does not scare criminals.

Honorable Members, a home is a place where one should find peace and security and as South Africans, we do not feel safe even in our own homes. These statistics reflect that house robberies have doubled over the past ten years. Ten years ago, there were 10 173 reported cases of house robberies. In 2014/15 there were 20 281 cases of reported house robberies. There can be no doubt that we are living in a time where criminals do not fear the consequences of their actions and we therefore have to look at how we respond to this.

Madam Speaker, there is a troubling trend of police brutality in our country and we need to address this

whenever we can because as citizens we need to feel that those who are there to protect us do exactly that. However honourable members, we also need to recognise that there is an attack on members of the police service themselves. Police officers are targeted every single day while in the line of duty. Police are less safe than ever in South Africa, 1 537 attacks on police have been recorded over this past year, and 86 officers have been murdered. Attacks on the police have increased by 31% and police murders by 11%.

We cannot begin to have discussions and proposals on how to reform criminal justice without addressing that fact that law enforcement officers are not safe and that criminals do not think twice about harming those who are there to protect us. This should not be tolerated for a moment longer.

In KZN, are facing a challenge of drug addiction, particularly amongst young people. Whoonga is now the favoured drug of choice and has resulted in many of these young lives being ruined. These recently released statistics paint an even darker picture as far as the fight against drug trafficking is concerned. We are told that 237 South African drug mules were caught overseas in 2015 alone. The national commissioner of police said that “South Africa was no longer just a transit point for drugs,

but a manufacturing base. Drug abuse, she said, was one of the biggest causes of crime.”

When it comes to fighting drugs, we need to be stronger in our rehabilitation processes and we need to place harsher sentences against those who manufacture and sell these.

Honorable members, as we discuss ways of strengthening our reactions to criminal activity, I have proposed in this motion that we consider a referendum on the death penalty as well as an amendment to section 11 of the Constitution which deals with the right to life. This is not a proposal I take lightly. When we talk about the death penalty we should always be responsible about it and it should always be regarded as the harshest sentence that can be passed and for deserving criminal offences. The death penalty should not be viewed as an act of revenge but rather, a way of rooting out dangerous individuals from society.

I do not support a death penalty for every case of criminal activity but for certain categories of crimes. We need to send a stronger message, to each other as citizens but especially to criminals; that South Africa is done being your playground and we now have a zero tolerance approach to crime.

Our courts should be empowered to pass the death sentence in cases where premeditated murder has been

established. We cannot continue to live in a society where people intentionally commit crimes such as murder, are given light sentences and then return to haunt communities and the families of the people they have killed. That cannot be justice. We need to rid society of such people in order to prevent others from falling victim to them.

Over the past few months, the world has seen an unprecedented number of terrorist attacks. In this year alone, on our continent, we have seen acts of terrorism claiming lives of thousands of people in Nigeria, Kenya, and three days ago in Mali, to name a few. Martin Ewi, a senior researcher from the Institute for Security Studies has declared that even South Africa is at risk of terrorist attacks. No country in the world is safe and every measure needs to be taken to protect citizens. It is for this reason that I believe the death penalty should be allowed and to include those found guilty of acts of terrorism.

The country and the world is becoming more dangerous and criminals are becoming more sophisticated in their activities and we all need to do as much as we can to counter this.

Honorable Members, fighting crime and rooting it out is something we have to do in order to save our economy. Nobody wants to invest and conduct business in an unstable country. According to the Institute for Economics

and Peace Global Peace Index, the impact of violence has cost South Africa 66.7 dollars or R830 million. When it comes to comes to societal safety and security, South Africa ranks as the 15th worst country in the world. The lesson from this is clear: crime does not pay.

Madam speaker, as we have this debate, South Africans continue to live in fear and many of them look to us, their elected representatives and leaders to bring them solutions. We need to stop paying lip service to crime and we need to start taking action. I would hate to see a situation where next year, we hold a debate on the same issue and to find that nothing has changed or that the situation has worsened. The time to act is now.

Thank you.

Presented by: Hon Erickson M Zungu