



GAUTENG PROVINCE

CO-OPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND
TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

To: All Media

Attention: News Editors

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For immediate release

MEDIA RELEASE

MEC MAILE EXPRESSES OUTRAGE AT THE DEATH OF INITIATE AT UNREGISTERED INITIATION SCHOOL

Gauteng MEC for Human Settlements, Urban Planning, Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Lebogang has expressed his outrage at the needless death of a young initiate at an unregistered initiation school. Upon hearing of the initiate's death, the Gauteng provincial government initiated an investigation that found that the initiation school involved was not registered with the Gauteng PICC (Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee). Twenty one-year-old Phemelo Motshwane passed away during an illegal initiation process at Renstown in Hammanskraal on the 25th of June 2022. MEC Maile conveyed his condolences to the family of Phemelo Motshwane.

The investigation established that the deceased, who came from Makapanstad in North West Province, started attending the initiation school on the 16th of June 2022. The Gauteng provincial government long ago took a decision that all unregistered/ illegal initiation schools be closed with immediate effect, working together with law enforcement agencies and other relevant stakeholders and sector departments.

The Gauteng Department of CoGTA has the mandate to support traditional communities and institutions in order to help to protect, preserve and develop their customs and culture. Over the past few initiation seasons, field experience has shown that many unregistered/illegal initiation schools pose a risk to these communities and it has mostly been unregistered/illegal initiation schools that pose a risk to the lives of young initiates.

Implementing the Customary Initiation Act requires commitment from various sector departments to curtail the proliferation of unregistered initiation schools in Gauteng. Reports have shown that while some initiates are kidnapped and forcibly taken to these illegal initiation schools, others are taken to these illegal schools by their parents/guardians.

The Gauteng Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee also recently took very quick action when they received reports of eleven missing children from Etwatwa and Daveyton. These eleven children were finally rescued from an initiation school in the mountains close to Dennilton, Limpopo. Following their rescue, these children received support from the Gauteng Department of Health and the Gauteng Department of Social Development, where they were given medical attention and psycho-social support.

MEC Maile reminded the public that the operation of an illegal initiation school is a criminal offence. He cautioned parents to be mindful of the fact that they will face legal prosecution if they allow their children to participate in these illegal initiation schools. The Gauteng Initiation Monitoring Team will continue to closely monitor initiation schools in order to protect the lives of Gauteng citizens and uphold the law.

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

