

## MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: All Media

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MEC Moiloa gives feedback on the matters relating to the current suspension of initiation schools in the Gauteng province

With the current Initiation School season ending tomorrow, Friday 3rd August 2018, the Gauteng MEC for Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs and Human Settlements, Mr Dikgang Moiloa, today addressed the media on matters relating to the current suspension of all initiation schools in the province and to give an update after the winter school recess.

“Despite vigorous information and educational drives by authorities to discourage the operation of any and all initiation schools during the current winter initiation period, the Gauteng monitoring teams worked around the clock to address several contraventions and related incidents throughout the province”: said MEC Moiloa.

The unfortunate loss of a young life during this past season, is one life too many “said MEC Moiloa. The MEC said that authorities are working together to bring to justice those responsible for the illegal practice that cost the life of a young man from Orange Farm.

MEC Moiloa was referring to the death of an initiate at one of the illegally operated schools that was reported to the De Deur Police on the 6th of July 2018. One other boy was rescued from the same school with injuries and taken to hospital. No arrests have been made as yet and investigations are continuing.

Over the past years, field experience has shown that many unregistered initiation schools and illegal initiation schools put our children at risk. The province identified two regions as hotspots, namely, Sedibeng District Municipality and City of Johannesburg, where illegal initiation schools are rampant.

The Commission for Cultural, Religion and Linguistic Communities (CRL) has suspended all the initiation schools in Gauteng until December 2018. However, a need was identified for the Gauteng initiation monitoring team to still trouble-shoot in areas where illegal or bogus initiation schools will be experienced during this period.

The Provincial initiation monitoring team has commenced already on 13th June 2018 and will conclude on the 3rd August 2018. This team was dispatched during an initiation season to respond to several reports of abduction, assaults and to close down all illegal initiation schools.

The team’s hard work paid off and the following successes were achieved:

- A number of 66 cases of abductions were reported and 44 young men were rescued and re-united with their families
- 4 illegal schools were reported and the team managed to close down 6 schools

Monitoring of these illegal practices also comes with its own set of challenges. Cross-boundary between Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West presented a huge problem for the monitoring team. The abduction of children from Daveyton and Dennilton presented an alarming challenge in particular. "What is also most concerning, is the fact that we found that parents do not want to open the cases after their children are rescued from illegal initiation schools; " said MEC Moiloa. This makes it difficult for authorities to protect our young boys and to bring an end to the dubious criminal elements that infiltrate these sacred cultural practices

Going forward, MEC Moiloa said that without any exception, there shall be no initiation-related activity happening for the rest 2018 across Gauteng and such activities will only resume in June 2019.

MEC Moiloa also reminded municipalities that under no circumstance may a municipality approve any applications to host initiation schools during the upcoming winter initiation season unless they have received permission from the CRL Rights Commission to do so

Meanwhile, the CRL commission has appointed a technical task team who is in the process of, amongst other legislative processes, the preparation to align admin systems of municipalities to respond to the customary practice of initiation.

"The Gauteng Provincial Government urges municipalities to enforce the by-laws without fear or favor and for law enforcement agencies to act firmly against those breaking the law in exploitation of this cultural practice" MEC Moiloa added.

The MEC urged parents to act responsible by not sending their children to these bogus initiation schools. In an event where abductions happen. He said that parents must report to the law enforcement agencies without any delay.

In conclusion, MEC Moiloa urged communities to work together with Law enforcement and other authorities to protect the lives and safety of our children and to safeguard the sanctity of this traditional practice.

Issued by the Gauteng Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Gauteng Provincial Government. For more information, contact Mary Martins 0798735022