

MEDIA STATEMENT

04 JULY 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SALGA CHAIRPERSON, CLLR THAMI NTULI, STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE ASSASSINATIONS OF COUNCILLORS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

The KwaZulu-Natal South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is appalled and shocked by the recent wave of killings and assassinations targeting councillors in the province. These acts of violence not only rob us of dedicated public servants but also threaten the very fabric of our democracy. We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families and colleagues of the victims, and we stand in solidarity with all councillors who face this atmosphere of fear and insecurity.

Just last week, on Tuesday, the ACDP PR Councillor at the City of uMhlatuze Municipality, Cllr JF Myaka, was tragically shot and killed with five bullets while delivering a sermon to his congregants at his church in eNseleni, Richards Bay.

Shockingly, less than a week later, yesterday, on Monday, another councillor, an IFP councillor in uMkhanyakude District, Cllr K. Mkhwanazi, was also assassinated. He was shot dead, and his bodyguards were injured as they were shot while driving in Mtubatuba. These heinous incidents and others are profoundly troubling and cause great concern.

Figures collected from KZN municipalities for the past 10 months, since September 2022, reveal that, it is now undeniable that Assassination is the leading cause of death in KZN.

KZN Councillors who have died between Sept 22 – 4 July 23 (10 Months and 4 days)

Cause	Assassinated	Motor Accident	Natural Causes	Suicide	Total
Number	17	3	17	2	39

The welfare and safety of the most vulnerable public representatives is a national tragedy. This tragedy is far more pronounced in Kwazulu-Natal. As SALGA, we were encouraged when the Minister of Police, Bheki Cele established a special investigating team to deal with political assassinations in KZN. We, therefore, call on the police to hand over the docket to this specialized unit without delay.

SALGA calls on all public members to come forward with any information that can assist the investigation into these killings. Moreover, the public is urged to reject violence as a means of resolving conflict. South Africans at large must not allow themselves to be used to end lives. We come from a painful history of violence. We dare not allow ourselves to be brought back to such times.

The escalating number of political killings targeting councillors, particularly in the northern parts of the KwaZulu-Natal Province, has instilled fear and anxiety among our public representatives. It is crucial that all leaders across all spheres and traditional leaders defuse conflict and promote dialogue.

The safety and security of councillors must be prioritized, and we expect that every effort will be to expedite all outstanding threat analyses where councillors have reported incidents of intimidation or threats.

SALGA sends its condolences to the families of the deceased. Not only the family of Cllr K Mkhwanazi but also the families, friends, and colleagues of the more nearly 40 councillors who have lost their lives in the past 10 months. {END}

Issued by: Cllr Thami Ntuli, Chairperson, 072 585 5000

KZN South African Local Government Association