

URGENT
FAX TRANSMISSION

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30 September 2009

The Station Commissioner,
SAPS SYDENHAM
Per fax to 031-2098762

RE : VIOLENCE AT KENNEDY ROAD INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

1.The recent attacks on residents of the Kennedy Road informal settlement, not far from your station, are a cause for great concern. Two people are reported dead, a number are injured, and a thousand people, fearing for their safety, have reportedly left their homes in the settlement. It is alleged that those who carried out these attacks were armed with all manner of dangerous weapons, including guns, and that some of the attackers were not known to the residents – although the fact that some were reportedly wearing balaclavas would hinder their being easily identified.

2.From reports I have been given, and from a video about this violence, I am struck by the similarity of what happened at Kennedy Road to numerous other attacks, including on informal settlements, which I have encountered during twenty five years of monitoring violence, suggesting to me that the attacks were orchestrated, and not some sort of spontaneous intra-community action, as has been suggested by some people quoted in media reports.

3.There are serious allegations concerning the failure of the police to protect people from attack, so I would appreciate your clarification regarding the following questions:

3.1 the initial attacks reportedly took place during the early hours of the morning of 27 September 2009 and it is alleged that attempts to call the police to intervene timeously were unsuccessful. Please advise

3.1.1.whether you have a record of calls made to your station reporting the attack and, if so, what time such call/s was/were made and what time you despatched members to the settlement

3.2.video footage, posted on You Tube, shows a strong police presence at the settlement during the day on 27 September. According to interviews with the wife and daughter of Abahlali baseMjondolo President S'bu Zikode attackers had been looking for Zikode, who, fearing for his life, was in hiding (as was Vice President of the organisation). The Zikode family were in the process of removing belongings from their house, fearing further attacks – as were many other

people. Video footage taken the following day shows that their fears were well-founded, severe damage having been done to the Zikode home, presumably during the night.

3.2.1..Please advise whether police were stationed at the settlement during the night of 27/28 September, and during subsequent days, and, if so, why no action was apparently taken to prevent criminal action

4.Eight people have reportedly been arrested following the violence. Please provide details of

4.1.charges the accused are facing

4.2.all case reference numbers relating to the violence

4.3.whether any weapons have been confiscated

5.Please provide full details of what you are doing to ensure protection for all residents of Kennedy Road settlement.

Given allegations which have been made about reluctance on the part of the police to supply information about the violence, I would like to remind you that the questions I have asked are in the public interest and your response is required as soon as possible.

MARY DE HAAS (MRS)

KZN MONITOR

Cc Provincial Commissioner SAPS KZN