

Partnerships, multiple strategies to promote school safety

President Cyril Ramaphosa says the South African Police Service (SAPS) has entered into partnerships to come up with strategies to tackle safety in schools.



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Responding to oral questions in the National Assembly, the President said violence in schools is a matter of grave concern that calls for cooperation between government, school leadership, parents and communities.

“In response to these challenges in schools, the South African Police Service and the Department of Basic Education have entered into a Protocol on School Safety.

“The purpose of this protocol is to create a safe, friendly and caring learning environment within schools and to promote multi-stakeholder collaboration in the fight against criminal activities in schools.

“As a consequence, a number of safety measures have been put in place, including that all schools in the country should be linked to a specific police station so that if any incident of violence occurs, there should be rapid response,” he said.

The President said school-based violence undermines the environment necessary for effective teaching and learning.

He said schools must be places where learners feel safe and secure.

“SAPS has appointed dedicated school safety officers in most areas to serve as liaison officers between the police and the schools.

“School safety committees have been established, comprising school management, police, school governing bodies and other relevant stakeholders.”

President Ramaphosa said the police, in collaboration with various stakeholders, undertakes social crime prevention programmes that focus on substance abuse, bullying, violence prevention, sexual offences and cyber-related matters.

He said the majority of pupils that are involved in criminal activities are also affected by social challenges in their communities such as substance abuse, domestic violence and other crimes.

“To address these, the Department of Basic Education, in collaboration with SAPS, the departments of Social Development and Justice and other stakeholders in education recently convened a School Safety Summit.

“School safety also featured prominently in the National Youth Crime Prevention Summit held in June this year.

“These summits proceed from the understanding that violence in schools is a social problem, which can only be addressed through collaboration between government, stakeholders and communities and through a joint problem solving approach,” the President said.

One of the tangible initiatives to come out of these summits is the National Youth Crime Prevention Strategy, which is currently being developed.

“The strategy aims to integrate government efforts to prevent youth criminality, including in institutions of learning.

“Unless we work together as a society to curb violence in schools as a matter of urgency, we will find it difficult to curb crime and violence in our society for many years to come,” the President said.

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