

CAPE TIMES



CAPE Ballet Africa's acclaimed triple bill SALT returns in full force, featuring original works choreographed by Kirsten Isenberg, multi-award-winning artist, Mthuthuzeli November and Michelle Reid, at Theatre on the Bay. Pictured is Isenberg's Reverie (See Page 5). | PAUL SEABY

JUSTICE SYSTEM AT RISK OF TOTAL COLLAPSE – MKHWANAZI

RAPULA MOATSHE and KAMOGELO MOICHELA

KWAZULU-Natal SAPS Commissioner Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi warned that the South African criminal justice system is teetering on the edge of collapse, and the Madlanga Judicial Commission of Inquiry is crucial in preventing a complete breakdown.

Mkhwanazi was the first witness to testify before the Commission at the Brigitte Mabandla Justice College in Pretoria yesterday.

He emphasised that criminality and corruption pose a significant threat to the independence of South Africa's justice system. He said his concerns about political interference in police work are shared by many within the SAPS and referred to his July 6 briefing where he alleged that now suspended Minister of Police, Senzo Mchunu had colluded with "dodgy businesspeople" and criminal networks, including drug cartels, to sabotage SAPS operations.

Central to his explosive claims was the disbanding of the Political Killings Task Team, which had been investigating over 120 politically linked murder cases. "I must indicate that the July 6 brief-

ing was the result of collective efforts by various units within the SAPS," he said. "It reflects the shared concerns of officers across different ranks who are committed to resolving these issues so we can serve with honor and dignity."

"I want to demonstrate that the criminal justice system has been subjected to a continuous threat as well as sabotage. We believe there is a real risk of total collapse if nothing is done," Mkhwanazi told the Commission.

Mkhwanazi yesterday also confirmed that the embattled Political Killings Task Team is now fully funded and operational until March 2026. Mkhwanazi told the Commission that a renewed funding request submitted on July 23 was approved, ensuring the task team's continued operations.

"The team is now fully deployed to do the work," he stated.

Mkhwanazi outlined the origins, structure, and strategy of the task team,

emphasising its "unmatched success rate" in tackling politically motivated violence.

He pointed to statistical evidence showing the unit's effectiveness and confirmed that its mandate has recently expanded to include investigations into attacks on traditional leaders and corruption at the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape.

Chief evidence leader Terry Motau had earlier outlined that the Madlanga Inquiry would be conducted in three phases. He said the Commission will start by hearing extensive testimony from Mkhwanazi, who will be required to provide detailed accounts of his claims, present any supporting evidence, such as documents, communications, and reports. He will also undergo questioning from evidence leaders and the Commission to clarify and verify the timelines and specifics of each allegation.

He emphasised that Mkhwanazi will identify the individuals and institutions

involved, under oath and on record, while taking into account safety concerns that may require sensitive information to be heard in camera to protect ongoing investigations. He revealed that witnesses corroborating Mkhwanazi's allegations will include National Commissioner General Fannie Masemola, members of the Political Killings Task Team, detectives, prosecutors, and experts.

Those implicated, including the suspended Minister of Police, Senzo Mchunu will be invited to provide testimony. In the second phase, the Commission will thoroughly examine the evidence and, where necessary, evaluate rebuttals to the allegations made during Phase One.

Motau said: "Individuals and institutional representatives implicated by Lieutenant General Mkhwanazi's statements and evidence - including, for instance, the suspended Minister of Police— will be invited or, if necessary, compelled to

appear before the Commission and provide testimony." In Phase Three, the final phase, the Commission will hear further testimony from Mkhwanazi and other key witnesses to respond to the perspectives and counter-allegations made by those implicated during Phase Two.

Motau said: "This phase will provide Lt Gen Mkhwanazi the opportunity to respond directly to any conflicting accounts, clarify points of contention and, where necessary, offer additional evidence or context. Should there be aspects where he recognises errors or omissions, this will be the appropriate juncture for such acknowledgements."

Justice Mbuyiseli Madlanga noted in his opening remarks that the South African public's interest in the investigation is unsurprising, given the serious nature of Mkhwanazi's allegations made on July 6, 2025, regarding the alleged infiltration or undue influence on the criminal justice system.

"If the allegations are proved to be true, that spells doom for South Africa's criminal justice system. A healthy criminal justice system is key to the rule of law and, in turn, to a functioning constitutional democracy," he said

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ARTS | P5

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NATION

Backlash grows against Gayton McKenzie over cultural festival funding cuts

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SPORT, Arts and Culture Minister, Gayton McKenzie, is facing widespread criticism from various segments of the arts and culture industry after his department's decision to withdraw support from significant cultural festivals and the perceived reduction in funding opportunities for organisations within the sector.

The move has plunged renowned events like the Cape Town International Jazz Festival, the National Arts Festival, Suidoosterfees, KKNK, Wordfees, Innibos, Aardklop, and the Vrystaat Kunstfees into crisis, raising concerns about the future of South Africa's cultural landscape. President of the South African Roadies Association (SARA), Freddie Nyathela, a non-profit training organisation providing technical and production skills training for youth, said they were dismayed by McKenzie's decision.

"The current affairs are dire, with a rogue minister abusing public power, bullying, and disrespecting the arts and culture sector with impunity, at the expense of youth empowerment, job creation and transformation," Nyathela said.

Nyathela further alleged that McKenzie has deliberately imposed "sector clusters" to "capture the Department" and has transformed the public purse into his "personal slush fund for selfish interests".

He accused McKenzie of disregarding the rule of law, including the approved revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, and Section 16 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

Actor and chairperson of the South African Guild of Actors (SAGA), Jack Devnarin, echoed the industry's bewilderment and apprehension regarding McKenzie's decisions.

"It has come to our attention that the minister is now limiting funding opportunities and shutting down subsidies... we are concerned about this because we don't know why he is making these choices," Devnarin said.

SAGA is now calling for urgent and constant industry engagement to understand McKenzie's rationale.

"We are calling for constant industry engagement because we need to understand his thinking," Devnarin said.

He pointed out the dire consequences for organisations reliant on government funding.

"A lot of entities relying on funding from the government are not able to sustain themselves because of the shortage of these subsidies."

"We are confused as to where the minister is going with this... so to curb that confusion there has to be a structural engagement otherwise we need to start engaging portfolio committees on the matter."

NATION

Traffic officers voice concerns over proposed metro police merger

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"BEING a traffic officer is more than a job, it is our passion, a career path we chose now the City is trying to change that without giving us a say."

These are the words of a traffic officer who has served the City for many years, who said he is now facing mounting pressure to sign over to a newly proposed amalgamated municipal police force, with Law Enforcement, Metro Police, and Traffic Services merged into one unit.

While City officials insist that no one is being forced to move to the new unit, officers on the ground tell a different story.

The official amalgamation has been shifted from an October 1 start, to February next year.

Resistance to the amalgamation has been building since the plan was first announced. If it goes ahead, the role of traffic officers is expected to be altered, with broader duties beyond traditional traffic management now on the table.

Concerns have also been raised that municipalities do not have the legal authority to unilaterally alter, or reassign the powers and functions of traffic officers granted under national laws that govern their duties like the Road Traffic Management Corporation Act (RTMC) and the National Road Traffic Act (NRTA).

According to the South African Municipal Workers' Union (Samwu), some 2500 of their members in the safety and security directorate will be affected by the move. The union said critical questions about the transition remain unanswered.

"We are urgently requesting information from the City about how the proposed amalgamation will affect our members especially in terms of their finances, working conditions and job descriptions. Our members need to understand what financial implications they will face; what changes they will be subjected to; whether their working hours will be extended and how their roles might shift beyond what they originally signed up for. We

are extremely concerned about the lack of transparency. Our members are growing increasingly anxious as they receive instructions to carry out duties that fall outside their current job descriptions. For example, some traffic officers have reportedly been tasked with escorting tourists at Table Mountain or guarding municipal buildings, duties that are far removed from their traditional traffic enforcement roles," said Samawu's, Hlanathi Gagayi.

"We hear that job descriptions may change significantly under the new structure. But we have not been officially informed of what those changes entail. Traffic officers, in particular, are regulated by laws specific to their field. From chiefs you now have new terms introduced like 'commissioner', it is concerning."

The matter is currently with the Municipal Managers' Forum (MMF), with answers to their questions expected this week, the union said.

According to an officer who asked to remain anonymous for fear of victimisa-

tion, they were told: "Our overtime we've been working will disappear immediately, the transport will disappear and your conditions of service will change to the new service. If you don't go over, there might be a small group of traffic officers who might stay behind and you won't get promotions, you won't get increases and you won't progress anywhere."

"Our suggestion is that the traffic department is a well established place that everybody respects and has been around for over 100 years. Leave the traffic department separate, let them concentrate on the roads as they always have."

The City said it is implementing a "phased integration of its policing services (Law Enforcement, Metro Police, and Traffic Services) into a unified public safety structure".

"This initiative is designed to improve operational efficiency, enhance service delivery, and strengthen community safety through coordinated deployment and shared resources. It is expected that a single service would reduce duplication, improve response times and cut

costs by streamlining management and infrastructure," said City spokesperson, Luthando Tyhalibongo said.

The implementation timeline was changed from October 2025 to February 2026 to "allow for additional training, union engagement, and operational readiness", Tyhalibongo said.

"We are actively engaging with unions to address concerns raised during consultations. These matters are best resolved through structured dialogue."

On safety concerns, the City said "high-risk environments" are part of the reality of public safety work for all uniformed staff, whether in Traffic, Metro Police, or Law Enforcement.

"For those who elect to be integrated, a unified job description will be applied. There will be no negative financial impact on staff."

"Working hours will follow the City's existing shift systems and no changes to base income are anticipated. As has been consistently communicated to both staff and unions, integration remains voluntary at this stage," he said.



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AR IS AN ACT OF VIOLENCE PUSHED TO ITS UTMOST LIMITS.
| **CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ**