

Crn: Kuhn & Prinsloo

VREDE, 9835

Tel: 058 913 8300



Private Bag x 5

VREDE, 9835

Fax: 058 913 2317

OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: All Media and members of the community

Date: 19 June 2026

PHUMELELA MUNICIPALITY TAKES A FIRM STANCE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, COMPLIANCE AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

Vrede: Phumelela Local Municipality has noted with concern the incidents of community unrest that occurred in Vrede on 17 June 2026 following allegations that a minor consumed snack products purchased from a foreign-owned retail outlet and subsequently experienced a health-related incident.

Upon receiving reports of the incident, the Municipal Manager and municipal officials conducted an oversight visit to the affected area on 18 June 2026 to assess the situation and engage with community members.

During the visit, municipal leadership observed that the retail premises in question had been vandalised during the unrest. The delegation also visited the family of the child allegedly affected. Municipal officials were able to engage with family members and the child, who appeared to be in stable condition at the time of the visit.

The municipality wishes to place on record that, at the time of the visit, no official medical records, hospital documentation or case number had been made available to the municipality. Family members indicated that statements had been taken by the South African Police Service (SAPS) and that further engagement by law enforcement authorities was expected. The

municipality will continue to follow up with relevant authorities to establish the facts surrounding the matter.

Phumelela Local Municipality strongly condemns any acts of vandalism, destruction of property and unlawful conduct. While the municipality acknowledges the concerns being raised by residents regarding public health, immigration compliance, labour practices and law enforcement, these concerns must be addressed through lawful and regulated processes.

The municipality further notes the growing national discourse regarding undocumented foreign nationals, illegal business operations and related socio-economic concerns affecting communities across South Africa. Similar incidents and protests have recently been reported in other parts of the country, highlighting the need for coordinated and lawful interventions by the relevant authorities.

Following a Section 4 stakeholder engagement with law enforcement agencies and other role players, the municipality has resolved to pursue a coordinated multi-disciplinary operation rather than community-led actions or marches. This intervention will focus on ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations while protecting public safety and community stability.

The municipality intends to engage and formally invite the following stakeholders, among others, to participate in the planned operation:

- South African Police Service (SAPS)
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Health
- Department of Employment and Labour
- DESTEA
- Traffic and Law Enforcement Authorities
- Relevant Provincial and National Government Departments

The purpose of the operation will include, but not be limited to:

- Verification of business compliance and licensing requirements;
- Inspection of food safety and public health standards;
- Assessment of environmental health compliance;

- Verification of immigration compliance where required by law;
- Investigation of labour practices and employment conditions;
- Addressing community concerns through lawful enforcement mechanisms.

A formal stakeholder engagement will be convened in due course to determine operational plans and implementation dates. Once finalised, the municipality will communicate the details to the public.

Phumelela Local Municipality urges all residents to remain calm and refrain from taking matters into their own hands. Community members are encouraged to report any suspected unlawful activities to the relevant law enforcement agencies and to open formal cases where criminal conduct is suspected.

The municipality remains committed to working with all stakeholders to ensure the safety, well-being and dignity of all residents while upholding the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of South Africa.

-ENDS-

**Issued by: Phumelela Local Municipality
(Communications Unit)**

Media Enquiries:
Mrs Mahlatse Phashe
Communication Officer
Phumelela Local Municipality
Email: communications@phumelela.gov.za