

Gang 'bloodbath' claims 14 lives in 24 hours on Cape Flats

Mayco member for safety and security JP Smith has called on the city's Special Investigative Unit to urgently engage with the police's Anti Gang Unit following a rise in gang violence in which 14 people were killed in 24 hours. The murders of mostly alleged teenage gangsters were reported in KTC in Gugulethu, Blikkiesdorp and Athlone on Thursday night and early Friday.

Lumkile Msila, a member of the SA National Civic Organisation, said: "We have set up a meeting with SAPS, neighbourhood watch and street committees for next week to figure out how we can put an end to this bloodbath.

"We are forced to take a stand on the matter as some of the boys from the KTC area allegedly went over into Gugulethu and smashed windows of certain homes of their rivals. We met with their fathers at the police station and they vowed to do something about the problem if we don't," Msila said.

Smith said he was particularly concerned about Delft. "About two years ago (Delft) had seen a positive change and a drop in gang violence following the insertion of neighbourhood safety watch teams. Now the area is rated fourth from number 10 for murders. What is needed now is an effective investigation which will lead to arrests and convictions. We need to know what the Anti Gang Unit is doing about these killings."

KTC residents said NY78, which separates Barcelona from KTC, is used as a boundary by the rival groups. "Boys from this side cannot cross over the street into Gugulethu and they can't cross over to this side without being attacked. It is a huge problem." Three of the dead boys are alleged to have been part of the Villa Nova gang in KTC and had been attacked by an unknown group from the Barcelona informal settlement. According to their mothers, the boys had not been part of the gangs for long, and had been forced to join because of the area they lived in.

Harriette Manyathela, 61, said her son, Luvuyo Manyathela, 17, who had been gutted at the NY5 cemetery in Gugulethu, had had supper with his family about two hours before he died.

Luvuyo's 14-year-old niece, Nosipho, said the teen had been drenched in blood from his chest down. She recognised him by the clothes he was wearing. "I saw him lying there with his black sneakers and a green jacket. But the police arrived just as I was about to hold him. I went around to have a clear look of his face and there he was, just lying there in a pool of his own blood."

Manyathela suffers from various illnesses and said she depended heavily on her son. Luvuyo was the youngest of her four children. "I had high hopes for him, he wanted to become a pilot and buy us a fancy house and have many cars when he finished school," she said. Luvuyo's friend and schoolmate, Kwanele Ntyontyo, 17, died on the way to the hospital. His mother, Ncediswa Ntyontyo, said she had not been able to see him since she heard of his death. "We saw a group of people running up towards NY78. Shortly after, I was told to hurry as he had been injured. When we got there, the boys were fighting and even stoning cars passing by; it was a mess. I was then told he had been taken to the day hospital, but when I got there he was already gone."

A third boy, Kwanele Jacobs also died at the cemetery. His mother, Noluthando Jacobs, said she suffered from depression and did not know how she would cope with her son's death. "He was my right-hand man, he never wanted to see me hurt or upset. I am still in shock and don't know what I will do now that he is gone," she said.

Police spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel André Traut confirmed the incident, but said no arrests had been made.

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