



'VIOLENCE, CRIME ARE RESULTS OF MORAL DECAY IN SOCIETY'

STORIES BY SIFISO DLAMINI
Mbabane

WITH constant reports of violence and crime in the country, there is an increasing worry that society may be faced with a serious issue of moral decay.

This concern was raised by Senator Mkhululi Dlamini during the debate of the police first quarter financial report by the prime minister's office portfolio committee in Senate on Thursday.

The senator said there was an issue engulfing the country and he made an example that whenever one opened the local newspapers, they were often confronted with an article about the death of an individual. He said a majority of these deaths were not caused by accidents but they involved murder.

Since the turn of the year, there have been numerous stories regarding fathers killing their own children and men killing their wives, as well as wives killing their husbands in brutal faction. He lamented that there was something wrong with society as this was not normal.

Dlamini said as there were debates on increasing the number of police

vehicles and improving living conditions. He added that there was something much more important that had to be addressed. "There is something missing, our society is not normal anymore. The things that are happening now are strange and nothing like the culture of love and peace Eswatini was renowned for," said the senator.

He said the police were integral in maintaining peace as they were the first respondents to calls of criminal activity. He then suggested that the police needed to be capacitated in such a manner that they would be able to handle such cases.

He added that instead of resorting to the judicial system, there was a need for the police to be able to somehow identify special cases and referred the perpetrators to the relevant structures such as the psychiatric centre.

"There is a need to consider adding social welfare provision training in the police services training curriculum in order to allow them to handle a variety of incidents and avoid sending all criminals to jail as some may not get the help they needed," he said

He said some of these crimes raised questions of how a normal person would commit them which

society.

Eswatini Association for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (ESACRO) Executive Director Desmond Maphanga said this problem was very complex, as it went hand in hand with recent studies that have indicated there was a huge problem of inequality in the country and the gap or division between the rich and the poor was too much.

Crime

He said poverty was closely associated with crime and mental health. He said the issue of poverty and unemployment was a bigger issue that led to stress and depression, resulting in mental health issues.

He said some people who were faced with such challenges usually built walls of violence, aggression and impatience around them. In instances when people were depressed, they normally turned to violence as a release mechanism for their depression.

He also added that this could be attributed to the challenges of rural-urban migration, where a majority of people resorted to leaving their homesteads and headed to town in search of employment, which was not even available.

He mentioned that what happened

in the urban areas, the poor normally felt worthless and inferior which was associated with inferiority complex. This in most instances resulted in people turning to violence and crime in order to attain money to be able to make a living.

Maphanga also associated poverty to femicide, where people within families were cash-strapped and resorted to violence since there was no clear structures set up that could offer the needed help. He said in most first world countries, the unemployed were given social grants to assist in making ends meet, however the local government could not afford such.

He said recently there has been a rise in diagnosis for conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

He added that this was proving to be a concern as people were reluctant to seek the needed medical attention.

"This was the same issue that the nation was faced with during the early years of the HIV pandemic," he said

He mentioned people were reluctant to seeking the required assistance due to the fear of being labelled mental cases by society which