



**MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY NKOSI PHATHEKILE HOLOMISA (AH! DILIZINTABA), MP,  
DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AT THE  
OPENING OF NGQAMAKHWE CORRECTIONAL CENTRE ON 16 NOVEMBER 2020.**

Programme Directors, Mr Twani and Ms Ncwana,

Reverend Mr Vulikhaya Mbaswana and all members of the clergy here present,

Nkosi Ngangomhlaba Matanzima (Ah! Ngangomhlaba), Chairperson of the Moral Regeneration Movement, Nkosi Sobekwa (Ah! Zanemvula), Nkosi Magodla (Ah! Ngubonde) and Nkosi Nobhanda (Ah! Jongintaba),

MEC for Human Settlements, Honourable Nonkqubela Pieters, representing the Honourable Premier of the Eastern Cape, Mr Lubabalo Mabuyane,

Honourable MEC for Community Safety and Liaison, Mrs Weziwe Tikana-Gxothiwe,

His Worship the Executive Mayor of Mquma Local Municipality, Councillor Ntethezo,

All our Municipal Councillors, here present,

The National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services, Mr Arthur Faser,

The Regional Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services for the Eastern Cape, Mr Phiko Mbambo, as well as your counterparts from the four other Provinces,

The Senior Magistrate, Mr Jeremiah Moshesh,

Senior and all Officials from the DCS, as well as colleagues from sister Departments and Institutions, such as the Departments of Justice and Constitutional Development, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA - uGwebindlala), Home Affairs, Public Works and Infrastructure, Legal Aid South Africa, the Judicial Inspectorate for Correctional Services (JICS),

Zimamhlaba zaseNgqamakhwe, (ekukho phakathi kwazo uMkhozi wam uMam'uMzwakali),

Honour guests, including those coming all the way from my home town of Mqanduli, led by Reverend Loyiso Mphathelwa of the local Anglican Church,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Members of the media,

Molweni!

Naturally, I am more than grateful, pleased and excited to be here at Ngqamakwe today, to see first-hand this very impressive Correctional Centre. The amount of work done here is more than just an upgrade of a correctional facility.

This centre symbolises government's unwavering commitment to the rule of law and a firm demonstration of our resolve to create a safer society by creating an enabling environment for those in conflict with the law to be corrected.

In light of Covid-19, which continues to ravage society, we have taken initiatives to strengthen preventive measures and contingency plans in order to protect the health and lives of our staff members and the inmates placed in our care. We can no longer deny that this virus has dominated almost every aspect of our lives.

Programme Director, having an effective justice system is fundamental to the economic and social development of a country such as ours, whose legal tenets are the embodiment of our democratic system of government. I am saying this because it is a system that allows people to feel free to go about their daily lives without fear – to allow people to run their businesses, take their children to school and to health and recreational facilities. Clearly, without this basic human security, development becomes impossible.

This upgraded correctional facility is also important in ensuring that the inmates and offenders, who the police and our courts place in our custody, are kept in a safe and secure environment, in conditions that respect their dignity as human beings. People often take for granted the immense pressure that comes with the job of managing a correctional facility. It is indeed a challenging job. It has to be done well and correctional facilities are tough places to work and stay in. Anyone who takes the job of a correctional services officer must be brave beyond the bounds of patriotism.

By reason of the fact that South Africa is a nation built on the notion of human rights and the rule of law, our penal system position does not focus purely on making correctional centres secure, but emphasis is placed also on making our centres “PLACES OF SECOND CHANCES”, by providing offenders with opportunities to make better persons of themselves to what they were when they first entered our facilities.

In essence, this means we have a constitutional obligation to provide a safe and secure custodial environment and help the persons in custody to be rehabilitated and so as to easily reintegrate into society.

Whilst the majority of inmates conform to order and discipline, and as some show a sense of remorse, we do at times confront acts of ill-discipline and security breaches. I will, therefore, call upon the community of this area to assist us on the delivery of our mandate by not aiding and abetting criminals to smuggle contrabands into this centre. The same goes to some of our unscrupulous officials who embark on this shameful act.

This is a bigger centre compared to the structure that existed before. It will, therefore, foster closer partnerships with different community stakeholders, business and other sectors. Through the diversified programmes and activities at our disposal as Correctional Services, we seek to enhance community support for rehabilitation work and those in custody to be accepted back into society after release. They are, after all, members of your families and communities, who somehow managed to slip through your fingers and ended up here.

This facility will now house 50 inmates, a significant increase from the 39 bed spaces it had previously. It is also earmarked to be a self-sufficient facility. This will mean that inmates will not idle sit in their cells and do nothing with their free time. People will have to work and contribute back to the State. Classified as a medium centre, it will then accommodate those serving up to a maximum of 15 years. This will be a relief to community members who had to travel to East London or Mthatha for the purposes of visits.

This state-of-the-art centre is also fitted with an exercise area, a kitchen and dining room, a visitor's area, doctor's facilities, and a secure drop-off area. In total, Government spent R 37 991 962.28 in upgrading this facility. At the mention of this figure, I hear you gasping in astonishment at so large an amount of money that could have been put to better use, through the building of clinics, schools, roads and bridges, and the fencing of our lands for

animal grazing and cultivation of foodstuff. Unfortunately, these residents are products of our own society, results of broken families, moral degeneration, unemployment and other social ills such as greed, corruption and lost family values. Thus , it becomes our responsibility as government, through the use of your taxes, to create an environment for the correction of their wayward behaviour to become better human beings. Kutsho kwanina ukuba umntu akalahlwa.

These upgrades will ensure that Ngqamakhwe is the benchmark against which many other facilities will measure themselves in this province and elsewhere.

It remains critical for us as Correctional Services to build capacity in order to effectively manage and maintain our facilities through improved organisational structures and processes, infrastructure upgrades and support for programmes so we can improve inmate productivity and rehabilitation.

I will want to applaud those behind this upgrade, the Department of Correctional Services, the community at large and all those who contributed to the excellent work done here.

I would also like to take this opportunity to call on the public to continue to support and help rehabilitated inmates reintegrate into society, those who can, provide them with work opportunities in order to help them make use of the skills and education we provide through the programmes on offer, and join hands in building a better South Africa.

I thank you.