

DA Criticises Government Leadership On Crime

Written by Rudi Prinsloo

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The state of the nation address failed to provide leadership on the issue of crime, the Democratic Alliance said on Sunday.

Safety and security spokeswoman Dianne Kohler-Barnard said that if the government was serious about overhauling the criminal justice system it should prioritise law enforcement over political interests.

The dismantling of the Scorpions, "ostensibly for no purpose other than to protect corrupt ANC politicians" and the dismantling of the Narcotics Bureau and the Family Violence, Child Abuse and Sexual Offences Unit showed that the government was not serious about a "comprehensive revamp" of the criminal justice system.

"If the president has 'great concern' about the high rate of crime against women and children, he must go further and explain why the specialist units set up to tackle those crimes were closed down," Kohler-Barnard said.

"South Africans need a government that is willing to grant autonomy and independence to criminal justice institutions, and the ANC has made it clear that these words are not in its vocabulary," she said.

"If systematic overhaul is now an urgent necessity across our criminal justice institutions, the ANC must at some stage explain how this not an indictment of its own policies, and why South Africans should expect anything different this time around."

Kohler-Barnard said that certain issues not addressed by Motlanthe in his state of the nation speech were telling, namely: the dismissal of national director of public prosecutions Vusi Pikoli, the ongoing suspension of former police commissioner Jackie Selebi and the disbanding of the Scorpions.

The state of the nation address was an exercise in ANC history-telling, Kohler-Barnard said.

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