

Stringent security measures in place for Brics Summit

PRETORIA: A comprehensive security strategy has been developed by the South African government to ensure the safety of delegates attending the 5th Brics Summit in Durban.

Giving an update on the security forces' state of readiness for the all-important Brics gathering, which starts on Tuesday, 26 March 2013, Police Minister Nathi Mthethwa on Monday reiterated that "uncompromising security measures" have been implemented for the duration of the summit.

These include VIP safety, route, venue, city and accommodation security; a combined intelligence-agency and investigative capacity; crowd management and port of entry deployments; traffic control and rapid-response teams, which can be deployed to deal with any contingency.

Mthethwa said that over the past several months, the security forces, relevant government departments and other stakeholders have been attending priority Committee meetings in order to ensure, in an integrated and coordinated manner, that all necessary security measures are in place for the summit.

"Law enforcement agencies will be everywhere, ready for any eventuality. We shall be deploying approximately 1 900 SA Police Service members and 1 100 designated officers drawn from other agencies, including from Metro Police and Defence.

"In total, we shall have a capacity of 3,000 law enforcement officers and these are members who have acquired vast experience in policing major international events," Mthethwa said.

As with other special events successfully hosted in the past, Mthethwa said all security-related operations around the Brics Summit were being coordinated through the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (Natjoints), together with their provincial counterpart in KwaZulu-Natal.

The Natjoints was established as the operational arm of the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster. Its mandate is to plan, implement, execute and monitor all inter-departmental and cross-provincial operations affecting safety, security and stability in the country.

South Africa, through the dedicated efforts of all departments operating as the Natjoints, has an internationally-recognised reputation as leaders in major event security.

Mthethwa noted that whilst the gathering takes place, they have equally ensured not to compromise the safety of all law-abiding South Africans for the duration of Brics.

"Whilst the local and global attention may be in Durban, normal policing will continue unhindered."

He said the police would use the summit as an opportunity to engage their counterparts around security matters.

"The hosting of this important gathering provides the South African government with an opportunity of sharing of experiences, tactics and mechanisms with all Brics countries on crime and fighting corruption.

"We shall also tap into possible cooperation on various issues such as training in different areas of public safety," Mthethwa said.

Brics is an acronym for the powerful grouping of the world's leading emerging economies namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The aim of South Africa hosting the conference is to harness the country's membership to benefit the entire continent.

South Africa officially became a member of Brics on 24 December 2010, after being formally invited by the Bric countries to join the group.

South Africa's position going into the summit is to align Brics member countries' interests in supporting the integration agenda in Africa, and not just focusing on access to the country's resources.

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