



# AZAPO

AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION

**TO: ALL MEDIA HOUSES FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FROM: AZAPO EASTERN CAPE SECRETARY FOR PUBLICITY & INFORMATION**

**DATE: January 7, 2025**

**SUBJECT: AZAPO EASTERN CAPE CALLS FOR INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT AT INITIATION SCHOOLS AS EASTERN CAPE DEATH TOLL REACHED 29 DEATHS.**

The Azanian Peoples Organization in the Eastern Cape congratulates the newly graduated young men from the customary male initiation lodgers and schools. One of the fundamental aspects of our culture is the importance we attach to Man. Ours has always been a Man centered society. That is perhaps why there was great jubilation and excitement by not only core family members of the young men but by the entire community for raising a child has always been a societal responsibility hence umntu ngumntu ngabantu.

AZAPO is also deeply concerned about the number of initiates who died during this summer season and wishes to convey its condolences to all the family members. The preliminary report of this season indicates that the courses of deaths are man made and as such can be avoided. Our people must come together and critically analyze this situation and begin to think creatively around saving the lives of our young men and the intergrity of this age old custom. AZAPO does not believe that customary male initiation practice is time bound the notion that due to these calamities customary male initiation is obliterated is out of order.

AZAPO also believes that these deaths are a form of criminality' through bogus initiation schools, torture and dehydration which claim lives of initiates. AZAPO further emphasise the need for the government to institutionalise traditional initiation schools and to dedicate an annual budget, like other departments. The budget would assist in the healthcare check-ups, and male social workers visits at the initiation schools for monitoring. The must be visible policing, and availability of vehicles that will be used by healthcare inspectors who are going to be doing the monitoring.

However, AZAPO is happy with the number of arrests so far and wishes to congratulate SAPS but we are also calling upon Director of Prosecution to ensure conviction as a deterrent to all those who are hell bent on breaking the law. Department of Health and other stakeholders are doing a great job in saving the lives of our young men though it isn't enough, we believe that during the time of initiation period there has to be joint governmental task team with multiple parties to work together on this specific project.

AZAPO call upon Councilors and traditional leaders to cooperate and not compete because lives of our young men are at risk. The reactionary actions by government is not assisting at all instead monitoring teams pre and during the season must be supported and provided with all the resources they need.

**END**

**Issued by AZAPO Department of Publicity and Information.**

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