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PREMIER CALLS FOR CALM AMID PROTESTS

The Premier of the Free State, Sisi Ntombela, has called for calm amid protests currently taking place in Mangaung, Free State.

There are reports of barricaded roads, which have led to some schools and businesses to close due to heightened prospects of violence.

Premier Ntombela maintained that as much as residents were well within their rights to exercise their democratic right to protest, they must do so in a peaceful, constructive manner, and find amicable ways of dealing with the current impasse.

“While we completely appreciate and respect our people’s right to embark on a protest action, we appeal that they do so in a peaceful and orderly manner. Nothing can ever justify stoning of passing vehicles and disruption of businesses, which our people depend on”, said Premier Ntombela. “We are slowly trying to rebuild our economy which has taken a serious knock as a result of COVID-19, and the forceful closure of businesses will only cause further damage.”

The Premier also raised concerns about the possible large gatherings of protesters, particularly as the province is currently battling with the third wave of COVID-19.

“The Protests also take place as the Province is launching Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme targeting persons that are sixty (60) years

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of age and older, and the disruptions will no doubt have a negative effect to the programme”.

The Premier has assured the people of the province that all affected stakeholders will come up with tangible solutions to resolve the impasse which is no doubt affecting the community in general.

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