

**THABAZIMBI LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS: THE MAYOR-CLR.  
NALEDI MATLOU**



## **THE FUNERAL SERVICE OF THE LATE SELLO PELE**

**DATE : 08 JULY 2006**

**VENUE : REGOROGILE COMMUNITY HALL**

**TIME : 07H00**

- Madam Programme Director
- The Leadership of the ANC
- The Leadership of COSATU
- The Leadership of SACP and leaders of other political parties present here today
- Religious Leaders from all the Churches present today
- Representatives from both print and electronic media
- Ladies and gentlemen

We have gathered here today not because we wanted to but because of the dark clouds that have befallen the whole community of Thabazimbi. A dark moment whose shameful effects have been felt throughout the country on the 28 June 2006 a young innocent 11 year old boy, Sello Pele had his life tragically cut short by a gunshot to his head. It is alleged that he was murdered by a farmer a certain Mr Nel who we are told knew him very well. We are also told that he was playing at the entrance gate of the farm where his parents work and live when this incident happened.

Madam programme director, it is a sad day for Thabazimbi and South Africa as a whole that in this day and age a child like Sello can lose his life because the farmer who is alleged to have shot and killed him claims that he mistook him for a dog. This claim is shocking and undermines in all respects the bill of rights as enshrined in the constitution of the republic of South Africa irrespective of race or their social and economic status, the right to life and human dignity. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the death of this young boy who has been denied the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of the freedom we fought for. We cannot accept any reason that seeks to justify the laws of human life and the death of Sello. His parents loved him and I believe that however destitute the family is, they would have loved to see him growing up and becoming a successful young man.

We must ask ourselves questions; did Sello die because he belonged to a poor family, did he die because he is black and therefore less human than his alleged killer, did he die because this is a racially motivated death? Does his death represent a bigger problem than we thought, that racism is alive and kicking?

Madam Programme Director, South Africa is a free and democratic country. It is a South Africa that belongs to all who live in it black and white. We have a responsibility as the community of Thabazimbi, black and white to defend our democracy and to protect children from incidents of this nature. We have a constitutional and moral obligation to build a Thabazimbi community that enjoys racial harmony, a community whose racial relations is the envy of other communities and a beacon of hope for all our people.

Madam programme director, the community of Thabazimbi has demonstrated a lot of anger as a result of Sello's death. Emotions are very high in the black community because they believe that black life is cheap. I have no doubt at the back of my mind that the majority of the white population in Thabazimbi is committed to democracy. It is only a small section of the white community that still clings to this barbaric acts.

I want to call on all political parties, religious leaders, and peace loving people of Thabazimbi to reject all forms of racism. I wish to call on the community of Thabazimbi to exercise tolerance and avoid conflict at all costs. Let us give the police an opportunity to carry out their investigations free of any pressure from anyone. At the same time, we must call for the police to carry out a speedy investigation so that there could be finality to this matter.

Let us also protect and defend the independence of the Judiciary. We believe that the courts will be impartial in handling this sensitive case. We know and believe that justice will not be seen to be done but that it will be done.

Finally, I want to say to the family of Sello that we share in your pain, the hurt and grieve as a result of the loss of your beloved son. We have come to be with you today as you bury your son, to support you and to assure you that we will leave no stone unturned to ensure that justice prevails. We have no doubt Sello would have wanted to live in harmony with his white counter parts. We will strive to achieve this racial harmony and defend the rights of children and farm labourers who on daily basis face a life of hardship and suffering as well as living in fear of being evicted and dismissed from work as if they have no rights. We owe this to Sello and we should not disappoint him.

***May his soul rest in peace  
I thank you***