



Chairperson of the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) on the 2024 Initiation Schools Season Readiness.

For Immediate Release

13 June 2024

Members of the media, welcome to this joint briefing on the initiation cultural practice. Thank you for making time to attend this Media briefing as it allows us an opportunity to table our plans for this year's Initiation School Season.

As a Province, we continue to pride ourselves because we are and shall remain a shining example of good cultural initiation practice, where traditional leaders take the lead and responsibility to promote accountability. We owe this to all our stakeholders who go an extra mile every year in ensuring that we deliver a successful Initiation Season.

In this Media Briefing today, we are joined by my Colleagues as in Senior Traditional Leaders who are in the Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) and stakeholders from other Departments in the Province, the SAPS as well as the NPA. These are the Leaders of the most important Stakeholders during the Initiation Schools Season. Thank you, colleagues, for making time and being part of this gathering.

Ladies and Gentlemen, preparations are underway for our young boys and girls to enter the rite of passage from boyhood and girlhood to manhood and womanhood. In this season, will see many young men and women from different backgrounds and all walks of life taking an important traditional right steps in their lives. This cultural practice is one of the many practices that define who we are as Africans. It is a major and sacred stage in the African culture which sees the transition from childhood to adulthood. As we execute this cultural practice, all role players such as the Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders, Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee, Government Departments like Health and SAPS, Traditional Surgeons and Traditional Care-givers, Community and Family members play a very important role. We do this to reaffirm our commitment to a Death-free Initiation School Season as we have done in the past.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us remind ourselves of the terms of Section 28 (1) of the Customary Initiation Act 2 of 2021 which states that, Initiation is a voluntary customary practice, and no person may be forced or coerced into attending any initiation school or undergo an initiation practices. However Section 28 of the Act illustrates that:

- (1) Initiation seasons must be held during the relevant provincial school holidays and may not interfere or overlap with official school terms.
- (2) If an initiation school commences before a school holiday or continues beyond a school holiday or is held outside the period for initiation submitted to the PICC as part of the application process, the relevant principal is, in addition to the provisions of Section 33(4), also liable to suspension from holding initiation schools for a period as may be determined the PICC.
- (3) (a) If the principal is suspended as contemplated in subsection (2), the relevant PICC must, subject to subsection (1), replace such suspended principal with a person who meets the requirements of this Act and, in appointing the replacement principal, give preference to a principal of another initiation school being held in the relevant area.
(b) Any initiation school that-

- (i) commences prior the relevant provincial school holidays as contemplated in subsection (2), must be closed, and may be reopened once the school holidays commence (sic); or
- (ii) continues beyond the relevant school holiday, must forthwith be closed.

(4) The provisions of this section do not apply to an initiation school that is attended exclusively by initiates who have already completed secondary initiation.

In 2024, the initiation school program is scheduled to commence on 14 June 2024 and will close on 13 July 2024. The PICC received 703 applications (389 males and 314 females) from various districts. Out of 703 applications received, the PICC approved 631 (359 males and 272 females) applications. Permits have already been issued to successful applicants; and letters have also been issued to unsuccessful applicants. The list of 2024 registered initiation schools have been compiled and published in the Provincial Gazette number 3529 dated 13 May 2024.

Table 01 below depicts the total number of applications received:

Table 01

NO	DISTRICT	NO OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED			APPLICATIONS APPROVED		APPLICATIONS DISAPPROVED	
		TOTAL	MAL E	FEMAL E	MAL E	FEM ALE	MAL E	FEMAL E
1.	CAPRICORN	141	76	65	75	64	1	1
2.	MOPANI	65	65	Nil	62	Nil	03	Nil
3.	SEKHUKHUNE	344	164	180	138	139	26	41
4.	VHEMBE	35	34	01	34	01	Nil	Nil
5.	WATERBERG	118	50	68	50	68	Nil	Nil
GRAND TOTAL		703	389	314	359	272	30	42

The required documents which were expected to accompany all applications were:

- A letter from the Traditional Council of the area at which the initiation schools will take place, supporting the application;
- A certificate of fitness of the traditional surgeon issued by a medical doctor;

- An environmental report compiled by Environmental Practitioner for the area at which the Initiation School will take place;
- In accordance with section 26 (4) of the Customary Initiation Act 2 of 2021, a copy of geographical proclamation and/or title deed confirming authority if the school will be held on private land is required while a written consent letter in the case where an Initiation School is to be conducted on state owned land; and
- An undertaking signed by the Senior Traditional Leader regarding acceptance of accountability for the Initiation School

The Limpopo House of Traditional Leaders assisted with conducting a workshop for all Senior Traditional Leaders and Traditional Surgeons who have been given permits to host these Initiation Schools. The workshop was held on the 4th of June 2024 at Jack Botes Hall, Polokwane. Central and of cardinal importance in having conducted this workshop was to brief and prepare the initiation schools stakeholders on precautionary measures to be followed in order to have a smooth process during the initiation school period.

With all these efforts, we would like to maintain an impressive record of running initiation schools. Traditional leadership at all levels in the province has institutionalized the practice with effective governance systems. We want to commend all the relevant stakeholders and encourage them to keep to that standard. In an effort to prevent the unnecessary loss of lives, we request parents to send their children to initiation schools that are approved.

We therefore, call upon parents to authenticate the legitimacy of initiation schools they intend to send their children with their respective Traditional Authorities. There will be zero tolerance to people who want to take chances by running initiation schools without permits. We also want to re-emphasize that we will not be lenient to people who will be running illegal initiation schools. As PICC and all stakeholders, we will not rest until all perpetrators discovered to have violated all initiation schools' regulations have been brought to book. As we have done in the past, we will be working with our law enforcement agencies, to prevent the unnecessary loss of young lives and also to ensure that the rights of this young boys and girls are not violated.

Once more, let me take this opportunity to thank you as members of the media for your positive response to this media briefing in preparation for the 2024 Initiation Schools Season. Your constant

support and partnership in working with us to ensure a death free initiation school program is highly valued and appreciated.

I thank you

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