



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
ATT: ALL MEDIA HOUSES
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ATM CALLS FOR MPUMALANGA PREMIER'S ARREST FOR CONTRAVENTION OF LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS

The African Transformation Movement (ATM) has noted media reports showing Mpumalanga Premier, Refiloe Mtsweni-Tsipane, not adhering to lockdown regulations at Minister Jackson Mthembu's funeral on the 24 of January 2020.

According to reports, and a Presidential statement, Minister Mthembu succumbed to COVID-19 last week, a few days after he was admitted to hospital, making his funeral a potential spreader event that could lead to many other people contracting the virus in one way, or the other.

Mtsweni-Tsipane's failure to show leadership in the wake of a pandemic unmask her arrogance, and the selective nature in ensuring adherence to the set rules, thus giving merit to the "*all animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others*" notion that has become a trait in the governance of South Africa in general.

Premier Mtsweni-Tsipane acted recklessly, placing the lives of her staff, security detail, immediate family members, and the general public at risk of being exposed to the virus, an act that should not be seen from a leader who leads a province with an estimated population of 4,679,786 citizens.

ATM is calling on Minister Cele to be consistent with lockdown contravention arrests, and for the courts to impose a hefty fine, ensure that the Premier gets the maximum jail sentence of six months for the contravention of such laws, and further ensure that her criminal record sticks indefinitely, as done to civilians.

The underwhelming statement by Minister Cele that his office is investigating the Premier is not inspiring confidence because civilians who commit a similar crime are arrested on the spot, without the luxury of being investigated. There must be even-handedness by law enforcement agencies. No one must be above the law.

Against the same principle, ATM calls on President Ramaphosa to suspend Premier Mtsweni-Tsipane until her sentencing has been heard by the court of law.

It is disappointing that this gross violation of the Disaster Management Act occurred in the presence of the Commander in Chief of the country, who appeared unbothered as Mtsweni-Tsipane walked past him as he was seated in the front row.

It is just as concerning that his office has not issued a formal statement condemning Mtsweni-Tsipane's actions to date, showing tolerance of the blatant disregard of the law by an elected official.

We will not allow tyranny and anarchy to be the rule of law in South Africa.

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