

Justice Minister calls for courts security report

Justice Minister Ronald Lamola has called for a conclusive report on security at courts across the country following a clash between rival gang members at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court on Wednesday. **TimesLIVE** says the Minister, who visited the court after the clash, said the breach of security went to the core of the court administration system. 'We expect the courts to be the custodians of justice and a safe place for our citizens. **This breach of security warrants a conclusive assessment of the security measures in all our courts,**' Lamola said. 'Our courts are not war zones and weapons have no place here. To this end, our courts must be declared gun-free zones,' he said. NPA spokesperson Phindi Mjonondwane said, 'It is a concern to the NPA if the safety of the public members is threatened but we also know that our colleagues from the Department of Justice will swiftly deal with it.' **TimesLIVE** says security at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court was beefed up, with more than six policemen at the court turnstiles and main entrance when the rival gang members appeared again.

Lamola also heard first-hand of the court roll management challenges at the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court, which had scheduled the appearances of the two rival gang leaders on the same day. Leeroy Brown, aka Finch, was applying for bail after he was arrested in connection with the murder of Reagan Jacobs in April, reports **News24**. Brown's alleged rival, Keenan Ebrahim, appeared in a separate courtroom at the same time. He is accused of the murder of Bradley Sauls, who died in 2018 after he was shot and run over by a car. But their supporters ended up clashing in the corridors of the court building. Lamola said **officials made a blunder when the two cases were enrolled on the same day and said it would be corrected to avoid similar situations in the future**. He added that courts were able to handle such incidents, which is why police were able to act swiftly. Lamola said he would work towards introducing technology for the courts and ensuring that it was implemented. He understood that the department had already started with this process and believed that courts would be able to run with ease so that all stakeholders were aware of what was happening. 'The information and data collection must enable us to administer our courts in a manner that is efficient and is free of these kind of hiccups,' said Lamola.