

MEDIA STATEMENT

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MEC WILLIES MCHUNU TAKES A STAND ON MNR TAXI VIOLENCE

“A NEW multidisciplinary police task team has been set up to investigate ongoing taxi violence that has claimed five lives, and left five injured since June, 2009 in the Umlazi’s MNR route,” KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison Willies Mchunu has said. As a result of this ongoing conflict, many taxi owners and passengers are now living in constant fear for their lives.

Mchunu was speaking ahead of an-all-important meeting of the MNR Taxi Operators to be held on Friday, 18 September 2009 at MandlakaZulu Hall (AA – Umlazi) at 9h00.

The aim of the meeting, according to the MEC, “is a last ditch effort to allow the collective conscience of the industry to learn to find each other again. Our first prize is to ensure that killings come to an abrupt end. No-one must be killed as a result of any disagreement. We want a negotiated settlement that allows for the industry to flourish. The envisaged solution shall reinforce the principle of peaceful co-existence. Negotiations must never stop. I do not know of any other way of solving conflicts and wars except through talking.”

Explaining the decision on the appointment of the new police task team, Mchunu said, he has had a series of consultative meetings with various stakeholders including the MNR Public Transport Passenger Association (PTPA) over the last two weeks.

He added: “It became apparent that all stakeholders have “lost” confidence in the ability of the Umlazi SAPS to make any breakthroughs in murder and other cases reported to them. It therefore became necessary for us to intervene in this fashion. We want to see this taxi business grow, and in the process, it must cement its pioneer role as the first and leading black empowered industry”.

Mchunu assured all stakeholders that the new police task team will work painstakingly to unearth the mystery of unsolved murders. “Members of the police task team will show no mercy, no fear nor favour in their endeavour to find the perpetrators of this dastardly deeds,” he said.

He further added: “No matter how slow and painful, we must root out criminality and anarchy in the taxi industry. To achieve this we must engage with each other honestly,” he said.

In an unlikely event that the MNR taxi route conflict continues unabated, Mchunu warned, “We will resort to all legal instruments available to us in-order to protect and preserve lives of our people”.

Issued on behalf of the MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Hon. Willies Mchunu.

For further information, kindly contact the MEC’s spokesperson, Bhekisisa Mncube on 079 699 5755