

MEDIA STATEMENT

1st September 2009

“THE South African Police Service shall investigate innovative ways of dealing with public protests, and conflict situations other than the indiscriminate use of rubber bullets,” said KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Willies Mchunu.

Yesterday, clashes between warring IFP youth were dispersed by Police using rubber bullets, and in the process a newspaper photographer was injured.

Mchunu said: “We are saddened that a member of media was injured as a result of our police service action. On behalf of the people of KwaZulu-Natal, we apologise for the mishap. I want to assure the public that our belief in media freedom remains intact. We stand ready to defend basic human rights of all our people even those who are protesting.”

He added: “Pictures of a newspaper photographer beamed across the world by international news agencies does leave a bitter taste in ones mouth. Events such as these might send a wrong signal to the fans queuing to come to South Africa for the 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP. I appeal to Police officers to be cautious in using rubber bullets. Do not shoot indiscriminately!”.

Issued by the Directorate for Media Liaison & Public Relations on behalf of the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Willies Mchunu. Contact Bhekisisa Mncube – 084 928 4412 or 079 6995755