

MEDIA STATEMENT (for immediate release)

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A PLAN TO CURB TAXI WARS IN KZN

A multi-sectoral Technical Committee that includes the top brains from South African law enforcements agencies including the State Security has been tasked to develop a Comprehensive Strategy to deal with Taxi Violence in KwaZulu-Natal, MEC for Transport, Community Safety & Liaison, Willie Mchunu has announced.

Mchunu's announcement comes after yet another senseless killing of a taxi boss in Chesterville; the latest assassination followed numerous similar killings in the MNR (Umlazi), Nongoma, Mpumalanga Township, to name just a few places. Mchunu's calls for calm have fallen on deaf ears. Since he took over; Mchunu has prioritized engagement with the industry leaders, and pleaded with them to stop the senseless killings, but, to no avail.

"Although the policy thrust of engagements will continue, we do need the full might of the State to descend upon the taxi industry so that anarchy may be stopped. Unfortunately, engagements alone have proved inadequate in an industry wrecked by fear, mistrust and the lust for blood," Mchunu said.

He said: "The team is tasked with looking at the intelligence capacity, early warning systems, improving arrests and prosecution levels. It will also look at the role of Izinkabi (hitmen) in the industry, any need for a legislative framework, and securing taxi ranks during conflicts. The team is also to investigate the possible ban of security firms that guards taxi ranks. The overall aim of the strategy is to support the industry and make it thrive like others of a similar size."

He added that the team is expected to report before March 2010. "We want a holistic strategy that talks to the detection of criminals within the industry. It is my

view that if we deal firmly with taxi related violence, we may in fact be reducing trio crimes (business, house robberies & murder) rapidly. It will seem that the taxi industry has allowed the law of the jungle to reign supreme. This breeds not only violence, but, crime,” he concluded.

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

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