



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU - NATAL - ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU - NATALI
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT
UMNYANGO WEZOKUTHUTHA

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE KWAZULU-NATAL MEC FOR TRANSPORT, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LIAISON MR BHEKI CELE ON THE REPORT BACK OF THE FESTIVE SEASON OPERATIONS HELD AT ELANGENI HOTEL IN DURBAN ON MONDAY 19 JANUARY 2009

Ladies and gentlemen of the media I wish to thank you for your presence in today's press briefing and further commend the positive partnership and coverage displayed by some of the media houses in joining forces with the department in our efforts of striving for an accident free province. Let me stress that the purpose of this briefing is to officially release the accident statistics for the past festive season and furthermore emphasize that there is a dire need to cultivate a close co-operation between all role players in promoting the province as the epicentre of productive and profitable opportunities. As citizens we need to work as a collective primarily to support each other in a way that can be beneficial hence **Road safety is everybody's responsibility**. Working together, we can do more to reduce road fatalities in all seasons in our province-365 days a year.

During the 2008 festive period there has been a significant decline in road fatalities with 26, 6% nationally in terms of the RTMC report and 18% reduction recorded in KwaZulu-Natal as compared to the same period during 2007. Preliminary figures for road deaths in the province for the past festive season indicate that 290 people were killed in road crashes as compared to 353 fatalities during 2008.

We have noted recent trends in the decrease of road crashes and fatalities as compared to previous years and we are resolute in our attempts of strengthening our road safety campaigns and maximizing our law enforcement operations in fighting the challenge of road deaths. Ladies and gentlemen we are glad to mention that pedestrian fatalities have been reduced by 46% for 2008 in comparison with 2007. This is attributed to a number of

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strategies, including increased law enforcement visibility and other road safety measures, which were implemented throughout the festive period towards ensuring that our “**100% Compliance**” policy is fully implemented.

The enforcement statistics reveals that 46 407 vehicles were stopped. This is due to 181 additional traffic officers who were trained during 2008 complimenting the existing force of 658 officers; therefore ensuring adequate random breath testing for alcohol, speed timing exercise and as a collective providing 205 780 hours over this period dedicated to law enforcement.

The KwaZulu-Natal fatality comparisons for period 1 December 2008 to 17 January 2009 are as follows:

	2007/08	2008/09
Drivers	70	54
Passengers	109	117
Pedestrians	174	119
total	353	290

With regards to public transport we would like to repeat our plea to all public transport operators both buses and taxis not to put profit above the lives of their passengers. This follows a major crackdown as part of Operation Thathi'skorokoro where 356 public transport vehicles were suspended for unroadworthiness of which 179 of those were buses and 177 minibus taxis; 7 buses and 46 minibus taxis were impounded for permit related cases.

December 2008 will be tragically remembered when 28 people were killed, 31 critically injured and 34 others injured from the five minibus taxi collisions. Subsequent to this we decisively implemented a severe act of impounding all public transport vehicles found overloaded, over speeding and unroadworthy. The 16th of December 2008 still remains fresh in people's minds when a bus belonging to SA Roadlink brutally killed people on the N2 Hibberdine.

Our festive season road safety campaign of visiting tarvens, festivals and other public places yielded positive results; out of 222 384 motorists breath tested – 1340 drivers were arrested

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for drinking and driving (658 Pietermaritzburg region, 325 Durban Region, 212 Empangeni Region, 129 Ladysmith region, 16 PTEU). About 614 other arrests were made during the festive season ranging from drivers licences to goods overload, outstanding warrants and false documentation.

There are approximately 124 drivers arrested for over-speeding of which the highest speed recorded was 212 km per hour on the N2 at Nyoni driving a Mercedes Benz AMG Mr. J. Happy (32) from KZN (case to be finalized), another speedster Mr Raymond Naidoo (46) was caught on the N3 near Ladysmith driving a BMW at 208km per hour and was fined R9000.

In closing ladies and gentlemen of the media I would like to further reiterate that as government we shall continue to act decisively on matters relating to safety of our commuters as per our mandate. The recent barbaric and disturbing acts of violence and intimidation in the area of Umzinto and Jolivet are currently observed with a naked eye and are dealt with accordingly; we shall continue to beef up law enforcement to maintain law and order for the benefit of our fellow citizens as we strive for a better life for all.

It is clearly evident that whilst government will continue to do everything possible to prevent road deaths, road safety still remains everybody's responsibility. Unless we take personal and collective responsibility for our own safety on our roads, we will not win this battle against road carnage. We must join hands and make a concerted effort to an end to these senseless killings in our roads and **JUST DO RIGHT!**

I thank you

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