

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 14 DECEMBER 2011

ATTENTION: REPOTERS, EDITORS AND PR WIRES

POLICE TAXI TASK TEAM AND SHANELA DEPLOYED TO DEAL WITH AMABHOBHOKO IN MTUBATUBA

A PROVINCIAL taxi task team has been deployed by the MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu to monitor the ongoing issue of Amabhokobhoko who are harassing people on the road.

Amabhokobhoko are a group of security personnel harassing innocent people and are believed to be employed by local taxi operators.

Recently there has been an outcry of intimidation by this group in the Mtubatuba community and surrounding areas.

Mchunu announced yesterday that a specialised team within SAPS and Operation Shanela under the Department of Transport will monitor the area of Mtubatuba to ensure commuters are transported without fear or intimidation.

He was addressing thousand of eSiyembeni community members during the roll-out of operation Hlasela.

Amabhokobhoko have become a law unto themselves, they terrorise members of the public and other taxi operators.

They do not allow commuters to get lifts from private vehicles. If any motorist is "caught" offering a ride to a prospective commuter, Amabhokobhoko force the commuter to walk to the taxi rank and wait for a taxi and they force the motorist to pay a fine.

Sometimes they use physical violence.

Mchunu condemned this but assured the community that his Department is dealing with the situation

"I have deployed a taxi task team to monitor the situation in the area. What they are doing (Amabhokobhoko) is highly unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Each and every commuter has a right to choose their mode of transport and no one should be abused or intimidated. If anyone is found doing so, they shall be dealt with harshly and accordingly. No one has a right to stop other vehicles on the road expect the police" he said.

The MEC also applauded the community of Siyembeni for creating peace in their area.

Last year there were faction fights between Siyembeni and Machibini, which claimed many lives.

Mchunu warned the community to guard against those who create unrest to fulfil their ulterior motives.

“No one should takeaway what you have accomplished. It is your responsibility to protect the peace that has been achieved,” he said.

ENDS

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