



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU - NATAL - ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU - NATALI

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT**  
**UMNYANGO WEZOKUTHUTHA**

DATE: 25 JUNE 2012

**TAXI OPERATIONS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED AT MHLATHUZE VILLAGE FOLLOWING RECENT SHOOTINGS AT THE NGWELEZANE TAXI RANK**

Following months of unrests and confrontation among taxi operators at Mhlathuze Village outside Mpangeni, taxi operations have been temporarily suspended. The announcement to suspend operations came after a long meeting between KZN MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu and leaders of two conflicting associations, Ngwelezane taxi association and A – Rank taxi association, yesterday (24 June 2012).

Mchunu accompanied by leaders of uMhlathuze Municipality and Minister of Labour, Mrs. Midrad Ollifant who is servicing the Mhlathuze village constituency met with both associations and the local community.

It emerged that the conflict emanates over the operation of the taxi route between Mhlathuze Village and Mpangeni CBD. Recently there were shootings allegedly involving two security companies hired by the two associations at the Ngwelezane taxi rank. Both associations claimed they had applied to the Department of Transport for operating licenses however only one association was granted. Many allegations emerged in meetings with taxi associations and the public which are perceived to be creating instability in the Mhlathuze village area.

“Considering all allegations that have emerged, I have no choice but to appoint an independent investigator to look closely at all these issues. This investigation will help to clear the confusion on who is the legal operator. We remain firm that law must be adhered to and we cannot tolerate lawlessness. I have further asked the police to investigate both security companies employed by the two associations. I want their profiles and to establish which rights do they have to shoot and endangering lives of ordinary people who are using the taxi rank. Tough actions must be taken against them, even if it means suspending their firearm licenses,” said Mchunu.

Mchunu then addressed the community of Mhlathuze village, which endorsed the decision to temporarily suspend taxi operations in the area.

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“We cannot allow anarchy in this area. All stakeholders agreed to temporarily stop taxi operations. In a meantime we are starting a process of engaging both associations with a view of normalizing the situation. I have asked both associations to give me five members each to engage with the Department in finding long lasting solutions. This decision must be a lesson to other associations,” said Mchunu.

Currently the Department of Transport and uMhlathuze municipality are preparing buses to temporarily operate in the area until such time that the taxi dispute is resolved.

Ends

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