



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO : ALL MEDIA
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ATTENTION : EDITORS, NEWS EDITORS AND PR WIRES

Government to look at policy to prohibit bakkies from use as scholar transport, says MEC Mchunu

The **MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu**, has announced that government would look into introducing a policing that prohibits school learners from using bakkies for transportation to prevent further accidents.

Mchunu made the announcement at a meeting with parents who lost their children at yesterday's accident where a bakkie, carrying 30 passengers, lost control and dipped into a sewerage dam. There were five children who died on the scene of the accident and they are Nokwazi Phungula (female, 12); Sindiswa Bhengu (female, 12); Amanda Khanyile (female, 7); Lindo Mayekiso (male, 7); and Phumlani Shelembe (male, 18).

Mchunu, accompanied by **Education MEC, Ms. Peggy Nkonyeni**, went to meet the families and the community so they could share in their sorrow, and expressed condolences to the families on behalf government.

All deceased learners attended the local Senzokuhle Combined School in Nyamvubu area, Rietflei, under the Mpofana Municipality.

"We will conduct an audit of all schools and identify learners who depend on the use of bakkies for transport so we can prioritise them for our free scholar transport programme. In addition, we will look into the possibility of introducing a policy that prohibits learners from using bakkies for transport," said Mchunu.

"If we don't identify these areas now and put a stop to it, we will be sitting on another time bomb where we will see such an accident happening again," he added.

"We will also engage owners of vehicles that transport our children to get suitable transport," said Mchunu.

Mchunu also said transport officials would be immediately dispersed to the Mpofana area to assess how many more subsidised scholar transport buses would need to be added in the area. This follows calls by parents in the area for government to assist in the transportation of their children.

"We already have scholar transport in the area, but we realise it is not enough. There is a huge backlog. We want to get to a level where all learners especially in impoverished areas have transport to school. This is a policy developed by a caring government which does not want to see children walking long distances to schools," said Mchunu.

The driver of the vehicle has been arrested and the department has tasked a team of forensic experts to investigate the cause of the accident. The families will also receive assistance from the department and the Road Accident Fund with funeral arrangements.

Ends.

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