



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

MEDIA STATEMENT

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ATTENTION: Editors, News Editors and PR Wires

MCHUNU APPLAUDS OVERNIGHT ARREST OF 18 SUSPECTED GUARD RAILS' THIEVES IN HILLCREST

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu, has applauded overnight arrest by the South African Police Service (SAPS) of suspected road guard rails' thieves on Shongweni Road, near Hillcrest, off the N3 and M13.

The arrest came as government intensifies its clamp down on crime, fraud and corruption generally but specifically to eliminate factors contributing to road deaths.

Caught in the act by the Department of Transport's area foreman at about 21H00, who then alerted the Durban regional head, the 18 suspects donned safety jackets to create the impression they were legitimate road workers.

Hillcrest SAPS and the department's Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI) members were immediately called to arrest the suspects; three South Africans and 15 foreign nationals. A case of theft was opened by the police.

A similar case was reported in Verulam last month, which indicates a growing trend of this type of crime, which is causing the loss of millions of Rand's worth of public property.

The 8-ton truck they were using did not have number plates, but a temporary licence paper usually given to newly acquired vehicles.

Mchunu has lauded the swift response by SAPS and RTI members, saying this was critical in rooting out all criminal activity in the province.

“Our province experiences an unacceptable rate of road accidents, crashes, and fatalities, partly due to theft of public property including guard rails and road signs used as safety measures. It is becoming clear that what we have here is a syndicate that is all out to endanger the lives of road users and motorists in their quest to score profits through illicit means. Our message to these crime syndicates pretending to be legitimate business is clear; you will be caught and face the full might of the law,” said Mchunu.

Yesterday’s arrest follows hard on the heels of the suspension of the North Coast Testing Ground, a vehicle testing station based in Phoenix, on Thursday, for alleged fraudulent and corrupt activities in the issuing of roadworthiness certificates. The suspension of the testing station resulted from a joint operation including RTI, SAPS and the Road Traffic Management Corporation.

“Let there be no doubt; our multi-disciplinary law enforcement teams are out to prevent criminal activity. We have escalated our fight to defeat crime and prevent road accidents. We urge all members of the public to work with us by vigilantly reporting criminal activity and bad road behaviour for the safety of all of us,” added Mchunu.

Ends.

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