



# transport

Department:  
Transport  
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

## MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### MEDIA ADVISORY

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#### **MEC WILLIES MCHUNU VOWS TO CRACKDOWN ON POLICE OFFICERS FUELING CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN THE TAXI INDUSTRY IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

THE KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu, has vowed to crackdown on police and other members of law enforcement agencies involved in fueling taxi industry conflict in the province.

Addressing thousands of people in eMadadeni, Newcastle, in a meeting to report back on the milestones achieved in stabilising the taxi industry after years of conflict and violence, MEC Mchunu said strong allegations have emerged of police officers fueling conflict in the taxi industry.

Some were mentioned as either taxi owners or siding with factions battling it out for the control of routes in this lucrative but volatile industry.

In particular, several reports of police officers and other members of the law enforcement agencies being involved in fueling taxi conflict in Newcastle have surfaced and are being investigated. This will include members of the South African Police Service (SAPS), Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI) and members of the Newcastle Traffic Unit.

In his address, Mchunu urged members of the community to report instances where police officers were involved in perpetuating instability in the taxi industry, saying law enforcement agencies must always act in accordance with the law and ensure stability and fair application of the law.

"We are aware of strong allegations implicating law enforcement agencies who are owning taxing and also causing instability in the industry. Already high level investigations are underway to deal with this matter. We therefore urge members of the community to come forward with the information in this regard," urged Mchunu.

The weekend event, in Newcastle was to celebrate milestones achieved in stabilising the taxi industry in Greater Newcastle which had been dogged by bitter conflicts resulting in the death of more than 14 people since 2009. Members of the community applauded and welcomed the intervention by MEC Mchunu and all government spheres in prioritising the safety of the commuters.

As part of the intervention, MEC Mchunu led a process which developed a roadmap with clear plans of restoring normality in the operations and clarifying all issues of confusion and disagreements. Early this year, MEC Mchunu met with all the five associations operating in Newcastle, who reported that all matters had been resolved amicably and they were ready to work in peace and harmony.

This resulted in the signing of a cooperation agreement among the associations operating common routes and signing legally binding agreements with other long distance taxi associations in the province and neighbouring provinces such as Free State, Mpumalanga and Gauteng.

"The taxi conflict badly affected the community of Newcastle. We've reached a point of peace and communicating the message that users of public transport deserve a better service from the operators, who have also acknowledged their faults. We are convinced, judging from the commitment of all the associations in the negotiation process, that there shall be no violence again in Newcastle. As

government we will continue working hard to facilitate dialogues and move with speed in resolving conflict in the taxi industry,” said MEC Mchunu.

Among key security measures which have been installed as part of the intervention by government is the improved rank management system, with CCTV cameras, permanent security personnel hired by the municipality and proper identification mechanism of all legal operators.

Government is now in the process of issuing operating licenses, with 217 already issued as part of legalising operations and restoring law and order.

ENDS.

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