



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: ALL MEDIA
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ATTENTION: EDITORS and NEWS EDITORS

MEC KAUNDA CALLS FOR EXTRA CAUTION ON KZN ROADS IN THE WAKE OF A BAKKIE ACCIDENT THAT CLAIMED 11 LIVES

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Mxolisi Kaunda, has described the Harding accident that killed 11 people as a major set-back in the drive by the province to reduce road fatalities.

11 people died on Sunday (10/07/2016) afternoon and another 11 sustained injuries when a driver of a bakkie (Isuzu) lost control and overturned on road D1079 in KwaMbotho.

It is believed that the bakkie was transporting congregants of the 12th Apostolic Church from Umziwabantu to Umzumbe when the accident occurred. Of the deceased, 10 died on the scene while one died on the way to hospital (10 females and 1 male).

In addition, 11 other occupants were transported to St Andrews hospital to receive medical care and trauma counselling. The driver of the bakkie has been kept for questioning at the Harding police station, but has been offered trauma counselling as well.

Kaunda, who yesterday (11 July 2016) visited the area, said the recent spate of accidents were a concern to the department as it was involved in an intense campaign to reduce road crashes and fatalities while instilling a broad culture for the respect of road rules and signs.

"This accident is a serious concern to us, because we were beginning to register a decline on road fatalities in the province. However, to deal with this situation I have ordered a full-scale investigation that needs to be sped up so that we can get to the bottom of what caused this accident."

"The reality is that bakkies are not allowed to carry passengers. However, in the province we have deep rural areas where acceptable transport by minibuses and buses are unable to operate. In this case it is clear that the bakkie was overloaded and it had no capacity to carry so many people. But the investigation will tell exactly what happened," said Kaunda.

He described this as the biggest accident since the province registered a decline of 49 percent in road fatalities during the Easter holidays earlier this year.

"That is why we are very concerned at the recent spate of road fatalities because they undermine our gains," he said, indicating that in this particular accident, human error and lack of driver experience appeared to be a factor."

"Our appeal to the people is that we have to be extra careful, because these crashes rob us of the most active members of our society and breadwinners. We wish to reiterate the fact that road safety is not a concern of the government alone but it needs to be a collective responsibility for all of us," said Kaunda.

Early reports indicate that there were seven victims from the Mkhungo family, three from the Dlulisa family and one from the Mqadi family.

Kaunda visited all the four families, accompanied by the local mayors, the Road Safety team and the Road Accident Fund. He extended condolences on behalf of the KwaZulu-Natal government.

The full names of the victims will be released during the course of this week.

Ends.

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