



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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MEC MCHUNU AND GREATER NEWCASTLE TAXI INDUSTRY SEAL A MAJOR DEAL TO END CONFLICT AND BRING STABILITY IN THE TAXI OPERATIONS

A major stride was registered in the stabilisation of taxi industry in greater Newcastle with Transport, Community Safety and Liaison MEC, Mr. Willies Mchunu, together with the leadership of the five associations agreeing that all aspects of the peace roadmap have been honoured and adhered to.

Yesterday MEC Mchunu convened a meeting which officially marked the end of violence and tensions as all associations have signed operational agreements, which will legally bind their operations and mitigate conflict.

MEC Mchunu, accompanied by Newcastle Mayor, Cllr. Afzul Rehman and SANTACO provincial leadership, met the leadership of Sizwe, Madadeni, Osizweni, Masihambisane Bara-Buffalo and Osizweni Utrecht and Boundaries Taxi associations.

The meeting was called to assess progress on the roadmap which was agreed to as part of bringing about peace and stability in the Greater Newcastle.

The plan entailed having all associations and the Department purifying and auditing the membership, improving security measures at the taxi rank, signing cooperation agreements and attending to the issue of legalising operations by facilitating operating licences.

It also outlines measures to be taken in harmonising relations in instances where two or more associations operate in one route.

The intervention was initiated by MEC Mchunu in 2014 following a series of killings of taxi operators attached to various associations in the area, which was also putting the lives of passengers in great danger.

After a series of meetings between the Department of Transport, SANTACO and the leadership of all five associations, agreements were reached with commitment to work together to end conflict and violence. These meetings entailed meeting with general membership and meeting with other long distance associations in the province and in other provinces.

Part of the agreement was a commitment by the Department to expedite the issuing of operating licences to the operators. It was agreed at the meeting that a lot of progress has been made in this regard. As of 14 January 2016, out of 380 outstanding licences, a total of 197 had been uplifted (issued to operators) with 183 still outstanding.

“Today we are happy to hear that operations have normalized, the taxi rank is operational and safety measures have been installed. We are all satisfied that we have reached a ground-breaking agreement, which ensures that Newcastle will never again be plunged into a bloodbath and put the lives of innocent commuters in dangers.”

“We and associations owe it to ourselves to ensure that we go to the commuters and formally explain what has been happening and also tender our apology for the mayhem that has been happening. I really hope that we are now poised for new peaceful and stable working conditions. The fact that the department has already issued close to 200 operating licenses is a sign of the progress made. This is evidence that if we all work together, we can achieve total stability in the taxi industry in the province,” said Mchunu.

ENDS.

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