



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

MEDIA STATEMENT

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MEC WILLIES MCHUNU DECRIES THE DEATH OF 14 PEOPLE IN TWO MAJOR FATAL ACCIDENTS IN KWAZULU-NATAL

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu has expressed his deepest sadness following two horrendous accidents, which claimed the lives of 14 people in the past 24 hours.

Yesterday, seven people died when a minibus taxi lost control and collided on a tree in Ntonjambili, on main road P15 between Kranskop and Nkandla. This morning police have confirmed that the death toll has now risen to 8 following the death of another passenger who was hospitalised with critical injuries.

This morning, another horrible accident happened in Pietermaritzburg, when a minibus taxi collided with a light motor vehicle in Lynwood road, which resulted to six people losing their lives. There were 10 people who sustained critical injuries and were taken to the nearest local hospital.

It is believed that the minibus taxi was traveling from Sweetwater to Pietermaritzburg town, carrying mostly commuters going to workplaces. Preliminary reports indicate that a minibus taxi driver lost control, however the investigation is already underway.

MEC Mchunu has ordered forensic investigations into both fatal accidents, which will include subjecting to thorough checks of the wreckage of the vehicles, overloading, the state of the drivers, road and weather conditions.

"The two horrific accidents in Ntonjambili and Pietermaritzburg are devastating and a sad reminder to all of us, including those in public transport, that we must play our active role in fighting the scourge of road accidents. We will be engaging with the leadership of SANTACO and all other role players to proactively develop mechanisms to prevent such fatal accidents. These come after we have had improvements where cases of public transport involvement in major accidents had reduced. On behalf of government, I wish to send our deepest condolences to all the affected families. Government, through the Departments of Transport, Social Development and working with the Road Accident Fund, will do all it can to assist the affected families during this difficult period with counselling and funeral support," said Mchunu.

Mchunu further vowed that government will continue intensifying its efforts to promote road safety awareness and education whilst improving coordination with other law enforcement to improve integration for heightened law enforcement operations.

A team from the SAPS collusion unit, Road Traffic Inspectorate and Road Traffic Management Cooperation (RTMC), have started working on the investigation of these accidents.

The two major accidents come at a time when the province has recorded a decrease in road fatalities of 49 percent, down from 55 to 28 fatalities, during the Easter Weekend. During the Festive season, KwaZulu-Natal was the only province in the country that recorded a decrease in road fatalities of 2 percent.

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