



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

COMMUNICATIONS

MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: ALL MEDIA
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ATTENTION: Editors, News Editors, & PR Wires

MEC KAUNDA REACTS TO RELEASE OF NATIONAL FESTIVE SEASON'S ROAD CRASHES AND FATALITIES STATS

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Mxolisi Kaunda, has noted the 2016 road crashes and fatalities statistics released today by Minister of Transport, Dipuo Peters, saying they necessitate the redoubling of efforts by all stakeholders to end the carnage.

According to the tallied statistics, South Africa recorded 1714 road fatalities during the last Festive Season (2016), marking a five percent (5 %) increase from 2015. KwaZulu-Natal became the second province to record the highest increase in the number of road fatalities for the 2016 festive season after Limpopo.

Kaunda said that he was concerned by the high number of people who lost, and continue to lose, their lives on the province's roads.

He further noted that while there was an increase in the number of crashes and fatalities, KwaZulu-Natal did a sterling work by preventing major crashes, which is attributed to traffic police visibility and participation of the provincial government leadership and stakeholders such as SANTACO in various law enforcement operations.

"The 18% increase from last year in road fatalities in the province calls for bold and immediate action by all stakeholders in the province. Of major concern is that the people who are dying on our roads are those who are economically active – from the age of 25 to 44 years. What is also worrying is that 90% of these crashes are attributed to human factors such as alcohol and reckless driving. We have also noted that passengers constitute a substantial number of road crash victims. This calls upon us to intensify our road safety awareness campaigns in communities," said Kaunda.

He said that the Department will intensify mobilization of all sectors of society by creating provincial and national consciousness on road and community safety. Among the interventions the Department is going to put in place to address the road crashes and fatalities include:

- Reviewing the performance of municipal road traffic authorities individually;
- Adapting the National Road Safety Strategy at the provincial level;
- Revamping the "Mpimpa Hotline" to ensure that motorists, drivers and passengers are able to report on bad driver behaviour to avert crashes and fatalities;

- Assembling a monitoring team of engineering experts who will constantly monitor the condition of our roads and signage;
- Running ongoing road safety campaigns;
- Building partnerships with the media and other stakeholders to promote road safety;
- Engaging the Department of Justice and the National Prosecuting Authority to expedite the prosecution and conviction of road traffic offences, particularly drinking and driving; and
- Partnering with the Department of Health to ensure that in all our law enforcement operations, we have a health practitioner who will assist to draw blood samples of all suspected drunk drivers.

Yesterday, MEC Kaunda met with the heads of the Law Enforcement Agencies in KwaZulu-Natal and thanked them for successfully implementing the festive season safety plan. In the meeting, he also urged the law enforcement agencies to sustain the campaign throughout the year, to ensure that crashes increased police visibility and prevent daily crashes.

Meanwhile, Kaunda has condemned today's incident where four by-standers were shot dead during the hijacking of the Department of Transport's vehicle in eMpangeni. The hijackers ran away with the driver of the vehicle, according to the initial report. Kaunda has urged police to find the suspects with speed, and called on members of the public who may have information to work with the police. Crimes related to car theft, including the stealing of vehicles which are taken to neighbouring countries, is receiving government's attention with plans to tighten border control already in motion.

Ends.

Media contacts:

Mluleki Mntungwa: 060 651 1138 Mluleki.Mntungwa@kzntransport.gov.za

Kwanele Ncalane: 072 803 1462/ 079 699 5755/ Kwanele.Ncalane@kzntransport.gov.za

Nathi Sukazi 081 018 0518/ Nathi.Sukazi@kzntransport.gov.za

Website: www.kzntransport.gov.za

Twitter: @KZNTransport

Facebook: www.facebook.com/kzntransport