



# transport

Department:  
Transport  
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

## MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

### MEDIA STATEMENT

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

### **MEC KAUNDA ISSUES STERN WARNING ON VIOLENT PROTESTS**

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mxolisi Kaunda has strongly condemned the violent public protests that have occurred throughout the province, particularly in Richards Bay yesterday.

Pandemonium broke out yesterday when workers employed by a company contracted to Transnet National Ports Terminals embarked on an illegal protest, demanding to be hired directly by Transnet. As the protests turned violent, police rushed to the area to stabilise the situation. When they arrived at the scene, they were attacked and their two vehicles were pelted with stones and overturned with bulldozers by protesters.

Kaunda has issued a stern warning against people who embark on violent public protests in the province, which result in public violence and damage of property.

“Yesterday, we had a meeting as the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster where we instructed the police to be proactive and act swiftly in curbing violent public protests and arrest those who are implicated. Kaunda said that KwaZulu-Natal will leave nothing to chance in ensuring that those who damage the property during the public protests face the full might of the law.

He reminded protesters that South Africa was governed by laws and that anyone who engaged in criminal activities and damage private or public property will be dealt with harshly in terms of the law. “We don’t only want them to be arrested, but they must be litigated and be held liable for damage to property,” said Kaunda. Kaunda said that, working with the police they have put plans in place to curb violent protests in the province, given the fact that the country was approaching a strike season.

“We understand that people have a right to protest and voice their grievances peacefully. However, we will not allow these protests to trample on the rights of those who are not part of the protests,” said Kaunda.

He applauded the police for arresting at least 16 protesters yesterday despite being attacked.

Kaunda warned all those who attack the police when executing their duties as this was tantamount to the attack on state and its constitution. “The state has a duty to defend its people and property, therefore we are not going to tolerate lawlessness in our communities,” said Kaunda.

Another illegal protest was reported in Ladysmith yesterday when taxi operators blockaded the Helpmekaar and Pieters roads, demanding the Department of Transport to release their vehicles, which have been impounded for not having operating licences. “I am pleased that the department officials attended to the protests and stabilise the situation in the area. We also want to send a clear message to taxi operators that our law enforcement officers will continue to arrest and impound vehicles that do not have operating permits,” said Kaunda.

He said that police will continue to maintain a strong presence in all areas affected by violent public protests in the province to protect the law abiding citizens and property.

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