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MEC KAUNDA URGES COMMUNITIES TO ENGAGE GOVERNMENT BEFORE EMBARKING ON VIOLENT PROTESTS

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mxolisi Kaunda has condemned the torching of a bus laden with passengers in Durban after the residents of Ridgeview embarked on an illegal protest yesterday.

Kaunda also urged the police to strain every nerve in ensuring that all those who are implicated in illegal protests and damage of property are brought to book.

Reports indicate that in the early hours of the morning yesterday, the community of Ridgeview barricaded the road and burnt tyres, complaining about service delivery in the area. When the police went to investigate they were attacked and discovered a bus laden with passengers engulfed in flames. Fortunately no one was injured during the incident.

Kaunda said that the provincial government was concern about the spate of illegal violent public protests in the province. Last week 64 truck drivers were arrested for blockading the N3 in Van Reenen Pass complaining about the employment of foreign truck drivers. "In the same week, the community of uMtubatuba in Mfekanye blocked the N2 and looted goods in a truck after embarking on an illegal protest," said Kaunda.

Government intervened in both incidents which caused a huge inconvenience to road users and general members of the public.

In an effort to stem the tide of illegal public protests, Kaunda said government has begun to roll out a plan which has been approved by the Provincial Executive Council to deal with illegal public protests. The plan will see provincial, national and local government working together in identifying hotspot areas of service delivery before they escalate into public protests.

Kaunda also warned members of the community who embark on illegal public protests to desist from attacking the police when they are called calm the situation.

He urged members of the community to use correct platforms when they want to raise their genuine service delivery concerns. "What we have been observing is that people resort to violence before they engage government," said Kaunda.