

## **MEC KAUNDA URGES MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO REJECT UN-ROADWORTHY VEHICLES FOLLOWING FATAL R33 UMSINGA CRASH**

The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Mxolisi Kaunda, has vowed to clamp-down on illegal taxi operations in the province following a fatal accident that claimed 14 lives on main road R33, between Greytown and uMsinga.

Kaunda has directed law enforcement agencies to develop an integrated plan to root out illegal operators in the entire province, starting with UMzinyathi District.

This follows a fatal crash that claimed the lives of 14 people including a six month old baby last night. Preliminary investigations by the police revealed that the driver of the minibus taxi, which was travelling from Greytown to uMsinga, lost control of the vehicle and went down the embankment, killing 13 people on the scene. Four people sustained severe injuries and were taken to Greytown Hospital. Of the four injured, one died in hospital, bringing the death toll to 14, including the driver and two children.

The report further reveals that the vehicle, which has a Gauteng registration was overloaded, un-roadworthy and did not have an operating licence.

Kaunda has expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the deceased and wished those in hospital a speedy recovery.

Kaunda, accompanied by the Head of Provincial Department of Transport, Mr. Sbusiso Gumbi, this morning met with the local and district mayors and leadership as well as the law enforcement agencies to receive the briefing about the crash and later visited the scene of the crash.

Together with the local leaders, Kaunda also proceeded to meet with members of the bereaved families in uMsinga.

The Department, working with the municipality, are working with the families of the deceased to ensure that necessary funeral arrangements are made to give the deceased a dignified burial.

Kaunda said that the crash was a blow to the province's effort to fight the scourge of road crashes and fatalities.

"It is for this reason that I have asked the Department to lead a process of developing a comprehensive and integrated law enforcement plan to deal with the proliferation of un-roadworthy minibus taxis in the area. Communities must also assist us by refusing to board on un-roadworthy vehicles," he said.

The Department will also work with municipalities in the district to ensure that all taxi operators are legitimate.

"We need to act swiftly to root out illegal operators," added Kaunda.

Ends.