



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA STATEMENT

05 December 2019

MEC NTULI INTERVENES AT RBM FOLLOWING THE CLOSURE OF MINING OPERATIONS

The MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Bheki Ntuli has today, 05 November 2019, visited Richards Bay Minerals on a fact-finding mission following the company's curtailing of operations due to an escalation of violence in the communities surrounding operations.

Ntuli, who was accompanied by Provincial Commissioner General Khombinkosi Jula and RBM's Managing Director Wayne Duvenhage said he had been sent by Premier Sihle Zikalala to go on this fact-finding mission as the provincial government was concerned at the safety of the local KwaMbonambi community and the possible loss of investment to the province should operations remain curtailed.

MEC Ntuli and General Jula visited the hotspots where violence had occurred and the scene where an RBM employee had been shot and seriously injured in the past few days. This resulted in halting of all mining operations at with the smelters operating at a reduced level. Construction of the Zulti South project has also been temporarily paused.

MEC Ntuli has condemned the criminal activities and acts of violence in the area. MEC Ntuli said the community issues seemed to stem from two possible issues.

One being the community wanting the Chieftaincy in the KwaMbonambi area to be finalised following the installation of an administrator. They are also allegations around the land damage compensation process from some members of the community.

"No matter what the cause we do not believe that the community needs to resort to violence and harming employees of RBM to solve issues. However, all these allegations would have to be looked into as we build a plan to return stability in the area," said Ntuli.

"I will be tabling a report to the Premier and National Minister of Police as we believe that our interventions now also warrant for the national government to also come closer as a possible permanent closure of RBM will result in a major loss to our economy," said Ntuli.

Media contacts:

Kwanele Ncalane: 0728031462 / 0796995755 / Kwanele.Ncalane@kzntransport.gov.za

Website: www.kzntransport.gov.za

Twitter: [@KZNTransport](https://twitter.com/KZNTransport)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/kzntransport

Rio Tintos annual economic contribution is over 6.2 billion per year and RBM remains the largest taxpayer in KwaZulu-Natal.

"We are very much alive to the fact that RBM is one of the backbones of our provinces economy and thus cant afford to lose such an investment due to criminal activities, said Ntuli.

"The closing down of RBM operations will also result in job losses as RBM employs a workforce of over 4,000 employees and contractors."

Ntuli said following his tabling of the report to the Premier and Minister of Police they would return to the area to address members of the community as part of governments effort to return stability in the area.

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