



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA STATEMENT

07 November 2019

MEC NTULI URGES MOURNERS AT A MEMORIAL SERVICE TO BE ROAD SAFETY ACTIVISTS

MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Bheki Ntuli urged mourners to be road safety activists on a 365 days basis. He said this when addressing scores of mourners gathered at the memorial service held at Ntambanana near Empangeni following a gruesome crash that killed five victims on R34 near Empangeni Milling last week Tuesday (29 October 2019).

It is alleged that the driver of a white delivery Nissan Heavy Motor Vehicle from Bidvest was travelling from Durban via Eshowe towards Empangeni for delivery purposes. Reports reveal that the driver of the White Nissan lost control due to a wet road surface and ended up in the lane of oncoming traffic. The driver of a white oncoming Hyundai LDV (Light Delivery Vehicle) that was transporting members of the public from Empangeni to Ntambanana swerved his car to the right in an attempt to avoid the collision but the Hyundai capsized and landed on the right-side verge of the road.

Ntuli expressed his sadness at the spate of crashes that have claimed scores of innocent lives due to negligence and, at times, human error. He urged all societal formations to unite against road carnages in all spaces that they occupy to maximize the message. He further echoed what President Cyril Ramaphosa asserted during the National launch of Transport Month that road safety and abiding by the law should be practiced on a 365 days basis. Ntuli couldn't hold back his tears when families expressed their sadness in losing their loved ones who were breadwinners creating destitute households.

Ntuli indicated that his department needs to embark on more aggressive and unusual posture in dealing with lawlessness. He called for a review of the road safety and law enforcement strategies to ensure

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that it is able to deal with the current challenges encountered on the roads. He also acknowledged that a lot needs to be done in improving the provincial road network, particularly in rural areas. He also condemned officials and members of society who are facilitating corrupt activities within Driver Learner Testing Centres (DLTCs) in the acquisition of fraudulent documentation contributing to road fatalities.

Ntuli's arrival at the department in September saw him having to comfort families and communities in various areas of the province where numerous lives were lost. The most notable ones that shocked Ntuli the most in the province occurred in KwaXimba, Inchanga, Empangeni, KwaNyuswa, Pietermaritzburg, Jozini and Gamalakhe where many lives were lost and the department and the Road Accident Fund (RAF) had to intervene in assisting families with the burial of their loved ones.

"My arrival in this department has been the most challenging but I believe the war against road fatalities can be overcome if we recommit ourselves to fight lawlessness and change our mindset as road users. We need to strengthen our partnerships with all our stakeholders, including SANTACO, KWANABUCO, the Interfaith and other societal formations. I have also called for my top management to channel all efforts in formulating innovative educational programmes and a firm enforcement drive that will lead to saving lives on the road," said Ntuli.

While Ntuli was comforting families in Empangeni, another memorial service officiated by Cllr Mzimkhulu Thobela, local Mayor of uMsunduzi local Municipality was conducted in Pietermaritzburg where five people perished on the road in a crash that occurred on the M70 Henley Dam area near KwaMnyandu in the Pietermaritzburg region. Speaking on the sidelines, he echoed Ntuli's sentiments of strengthening and reviving road safety education and beefing up enforcement as a starting point. He called for a united front from all walks of society to save lives on the roads.

Ends

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