



transport

Department:
Transport
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

MEDIA STATEMENT

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MEC NTULI ASSEMBLES A TASK TEAM IN A BID TO RESOLVE VIOLENT CONFLICTS AFFECTING MPUMALANGA TAXI OPERATIONS

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Bheki Ntuli, has set up a multi-disciplinary task team comprising of officials from the Department of Transport, EThekweni Transport Authority, the South African National Taxi Council (SANTACO) and police which is tasked with addressing taxi violence in the Mpumalanga and District Taxi Association.

MEC Ntuli also mandated the task team to establish the root cause of the long-standing conflict among taxi operators in the association and derive a lasting solution.

MEC Ntuli announced plans to ensure stability in the association during a meeting held in Mpumalanga/Hammarsdale yesterday that was attended by the Provincial Executive structure of SANTACO and scores of members from the Mpumalanga and District Taxi Association.

During the meeting, a progress report was presented by the SANTACO Durban West Region which was appointed by the former MEC of Transport, Community Safety and Liaison Mxolisi Kaunda to take over the administration of the association in order to stabilise its operations.

Key matters that the regional structure, led by SANTACO Durban West Chairperson Mathula Mkhize, was mandated to undertake included conducting extensive consultations with the entire general membership of the association to establish the source of the internal conflict that has led to the death of nearly 100 members of the association, including the majority of its leadership in recent years.

During the meeting, Mkhize highlighted among other issues, administrative challenges as a result of the dissolved association's leadership structure.

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MEC Ntuli instructed the task team to engage further with the general membership of the association and make recommendations that will ensure lasting peace and stability in the area. The aim is to ensure that violent conflicts are eliminated before an executive structure can be elected to lead the association.

“We are determined to end violent taxi conflicts in the province, and such requires cooperation from all members. It is highly concerning that a number of people have been killed as a result of internal violence within the association in recent years. There are many discrepancies relating to the abuse of power by certain individuals who preside over illegal collection of funds from members. If associations don’t have constitutions that provide for the legal handling of matters, violence will not stop. We must start by embracing accountability in the industry if we are to make it a viable business. These funds which are collected illegally are often used for the hiring of private security guards, hitmen and many other forms of illegal activities,” said MEC Ntuli.

MEC Ntuli assured association members that their administrative concerns relating mostly to operating licenses will be addressed as soon as the task team concludes its work and an executive committee of the association is elected. He called on all members to unite and report members who are responsible for the violence and conflict within the industry.

MEC Ntuli also reaffirmed government’s commitment to transform the industry to ensure broader participation in the mainstream economy from those who were previously marginalised. He also issued a stern warning to police, following reports from association members that some police were responsible for fueling conflicts within the taxi industry.

“Police will maintain high visibility in the area and any police found to be involved in fueling conflicts within the taxi industry will be harshly dealt with. Law enforcement officers should serve and protect members of the public and not be involved in criminal activities that lead to the killing of association members and passengers. Police officers who abuse their power for self-enrichment and greed will face the full might of the law,” said MEC Ntuli.

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