

Arrest of a KZN Department of Transport staff member who is working with a syndicate involved in the rampant diesel fuel theft: Duma commends an honest transport officer and our specialized security team for executing #NenzaniLaEzweni Operation as part of dismantling the syndicate working with the South African Police Service

Media and Public Statement by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma.

27 June 2026

Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: We wish to announce that a dishonest and highly unethical employee has been arrested in our offices in Empangeni. This is in connection with a massive diesel fuel theft.

Themba Mkhize who is employed in our mechanical division has appeared in court and will reappear on the 24th July 2026.

We have decided to name and shame this dishonest and highly unethical civil servant because Operation #NenzaniLaEzweni is now rooting out bad elements from within.

We will do the same with many others including security and members of syndicates who are being investigated. There are other civil servants in various government departments including those that are abusing state vehicles.

Importantly, we salute our honest transport officer and our specialized security team of investigators for working diligently with the South African Police Service to ensure the arrest of this dishonest employee.

In Empangeni alone one employee is linked to the fuel theft amounting to more than R300 000 a month.

Unfortunately, many critical road construction and maintenance projects across the province have collapsed because of the shortage of diesel caused by this criminal syndicate.

We reported months ago about a R177 million road rehabilitation project in Bergville under the Okhahlamba Local Municipality.

A contractor was robbed of 300 litres of diesel by gun-wielding members of the construction mafia.

Last week, we published a statement following the arrest of three criminals in connection with the theft of 43 pieces of heavy construction equipment.

These include TLBs, excavators, pay loaders, rollers, tipper trucks, grader machines, truck cranes and departmental vehicles.

We assigned our specialized security team to execute #NenzanLaEzweni Operation using intelligence-driven operation focusing on the following:-

1. Cash-Back Collusion involving swiping of the department fuel card for a full tank but only fill a fraction or none. In this instance, an attendant pays the official the remaining balance in cash, splitting the profit;

2. Private Vehicle Filling: the use of official department cards to fill private cars or family vehicles;
3. Theft of diesel for construction machinery;
4. Theft of heavy construction machinery;

Finally, the Head of the Department, Zibusiso Dlamini, is currently inculcating a culture of good governance in the Department.

There will be severe consequences against those involved in the abuse of state vehicles and state assets.

Ends

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