Families traumatized as they witness two mortuary vans removing the bodies of ten victims who died in a horrific accident last night in Cato Ridge: Duma says circumstances under which victims departed are being investigated, including allegations made by witnesses.

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

08 October 2026

Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: This morning, teams from my office and Road Safety will be in a state mortuary in Pietermaritzburg with the families of the ten victims who died in a road accident that took place between Georgedale in Hammarsdale and Cato Ridge last night.

Families who have lost breadwinners are devastated, but the fact that their loved ones died while travelling to work, with certain allegations being made by witnesses, adds a profound layer to the tragedy.

Our Road Traffic Inspectorate Team and Durban Metro Police are working with the South African Police Service and Road Traffic Management Corporation as part of an investigation.

Under normal circumstances, we always avoid finger-pointing, but it would be irresponsible not to investigate allegations that the private minibus taxi driver had consumed alcohol before the accident.

There are further allegations that the driver tried to avoid pedestrians and lost control of the vehicle that eventually hit the tree.

More importantly, as we move forward, we wish to announce the following interventions: -

- Assigning a team of highly experienced officials to be with families in the mortuary and to visit them at home starting from today. Each family is facing circumstances that are unique, and therefore, our response is tailor-made to help each family go through this ordeal in a manner that shows empathy
- Consulting with families to ensure that the departed souls are provided with a dignified funeral. The Department is obliged to intervene, especially when more than five people have died in a road accident;
- Co-ordinating with Road Accident Fund visits to individual families to explain a package of assistance provided by the Department of Transport under such circumstances that are beyond the family's control;
- Determining, in consultation with families, days and locations for a memorial service for the victims.
- Determining, in consultation with families, the days and location of funerals of the departed souls.

Finally, we wish five other victims who sustained serious injuries speedy recovery. They were taken to R.K Khan and Hibiscus hospitals respectively.

Ends.

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements

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