

More than R250 million worth of construction machinery stolen in KZN by a criminal syndicate. This has severely affected construction and maintenance of road networks, with communities suffering: Duma says RTI arrested three criminals in eShowe and recovered a stolen grader. He welcomes progress made by a specialized department's security team working with Organized Crime Unit deployed by Lt. General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi

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

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Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: We wish to appeal to the law-abiding citizens of KwaZulu-Natal to come together against a criminal syndicate that is systematically destroying this province by stealing much-needed construction machinery.

Since 2024, we have lost over R250 million worth of heavy construction machinery and transport vehicles. This machinery is critical in ensuring timely construction of new roads and the maintenance of more than 34000 kilometers of our road networks.

Operating across all corners of the province, the criminal syndicate has stolen a total of 43 construction machines, such as TLBs, excavators, pay loaders, rollers, tipper trucks, loader backhoes, graders, LDV double cabs, and truck cranes.

Members of this ruthless criminal syndicate have brazenly hijacked staff and construction workers. In some instances, they stole construction vehicles and heavy-duty machinery under the cover of darkness.

The heartless criminals use fake number plates, impersonate mechanics, and claim to have been authorized by the Department of Transport to take the construction machinery.

This tactic is used to bypass advanced security systems and to trick unsuspecting security guards.

Flowing from above, we assembled an advanced security team, which is working jointly with highly trained members of the South African Police Service's Organized Crime Unit.

The members were deployed by KZN Provincial Commissioner Lt Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi.

We wish to draw the attention of the media to the following: -

- Recovered: 22 heavy construction machines and transport vehicles worth R45 million.
- Three criminals were arrested in Eshowe by Road Traffic Inspectorate. A grader was recovered, and criminals were handed over to the SAPS.
- Still missing: 21 heavy construction machines and transport vehicles worth R200 million.

The theft of machinery has severely affected construction and maintenance of road networks, with communities suffering.

While we have improved construction site security and installing tracking devices in our machinery, there is a need for communities to stand together against this tiny minority of criminals.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements

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