



# transport

Department:  
Transport  
Province of KwaZulu-Natal

## MEDIA LIAISON AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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### MEDIA ADVISORY

TO : ALL MEDIA  
DATE : Monday, 5 October 2015  
ATTENTION : NEWS EDITORS/REPORTERS AND PR WIRE

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### **MEC MCHUNU CONVENES URGENT MEETING TO RESOLVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT INSTABILITY IN GREATER NEWCASTLE**

Following an urgent intervention by the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mr. Willies Mchunu, yesterday (Sunday, 4 October 2015), taxi operations today returned to normal in the Greater Newcastle area.

Mchunu convened an urgent meeting with five taxi associations to restore order in taxi operations in Greater Newcastle after disruptions that resulted in the suspensions of taxi operators, leaving commuters without transport since Friday – and the weekend.

Vehicles were stoned and key points of entry to Newcastle town and townships were barricaded.

However, the police moved in and arrested 93 people suspected to be taxi drivers for public violence, malicious damage to property and intimidation.

After the intervention by MEC Mchunu, all taxi associations – Madadeni, Sizwe, Masihambisane, Osizweni, as well as Utrecht and Boundaries – agreed to resume operations and are working normal as of this morning. They also committed themselves to end violence and intimidation.

**“We condemn all forms of violence and intimidation in the taxi industry and in society generally. There can never be justification for resorting to violence whenever there are issues that require attention. Communities and members of the public should always come first for operators whose taxi business depends upon their patronage. I’m pleased to indicate that taxi operations in Greater Newcastle are back to normal. As we continue with our engagements with community stakeholders and taxi associations today, I’m certain we will be able to resolve all matters of concern for the good of the people of Newcastle,”** said MEC Mchunu.

In today’s (5 October 2015) meeting, Mchunu will meet with Newcastle community stakeholders as well as the leadership of the five taxi associations, the police and the security team responsible for the taxi rank to ensure there is tight security measures in the area.

The source of the latest conflict is not yet clear, however all taxi associations have all committed to working with the government to end tension.

Newcastle has in the recent past been experiencing a spate of killings of taxi operators over conflict involving the five associations. This previously prompted MEC Mchunu and the Newcastle local

municipality deciding to take over the security at the taxi back as part of ensuring safety for the commuters and the general public. This bold move has yielded positive results as the situation normalised and incidents of violence subsided.

Ends.

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