



Statement by the RTMC CEO Advocate Makhosini Msibi at the media briefing on the implementation of the 2015 festive season road plan

22 December 2015

Southern Sun Hotel, OR Tambo Airport

Ladies and gentlemen, let me take this moment to welcome you and thank you for responding so positively when we invited you to this briefing.

We had met here as Heads of Departments responsible for traffic management in all provinces. Among us were also senior officers responsible for law enforcement in all province and metros.

The purpose of our meeting was to review the progress we were making in implementing the festive season road safety plan that we had agreed to before the start of the festive holidays. We had agreed that from the start of the festive season on December 1 we would proactively deploy law enforcement and road safety interventions in order to facilitate safer roads during the festive season.

Our plan sought to achieve better co-ordination, integration and improved law enforcement and road traffic safety education activities for maximum results. It also encompasses the

notion of Road Safety being everybody's responsibility by cooperating with all Agencies, different Departments, NGO's and Churches in its numerous formations.

We felt that it was necessary to undertake this review at this time because we had reached the half mark in our seven weeks festive season calendar. In preparing our plans for this festive season we had conducted a thorough situational analysis which indicated that we were entering this period with a 300 000 increase in the number of registered vehicles and 500 000 increase in the number of new driving licence holders.

We understood from the analysis that in the previous festive season in the 2014/15 financial year we had achieved a 5.34% decline in road fatalities. The number of people who died in that period was 1587, a small decline compare to 1677 in the 2013/14 financial year. The analysis also informed us that four provinces namely Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo were responsible for 63% of all fatalities.

Given the recalcitrant attitude and behaviour which we had observed among our road users, we therefore fully understood that what this was not going to be a sprint to the finish line but that it was going to be an ultra-marathon. We however remained optimistic because as Nelson Mandela said: *"Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death."*

In the past twenty one days we have continued to observe an unacceptable and irresponsible behaviour among some road users. These are people who have been driving at excessive speed, driving under the influence of alcohol and driving un-roadworthy vehicles. We have also observed many passengers who do not wear seatbelts as they should and pedestrians walking on busy roads.

We have stopped more than half a million vehicles in all the road blocks set up in all major roads and others routes throughout the length and breathe of our country. More than 266 000 traffic fines were issued.

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90 000 drivers were tested for alcohol use and 1 200 were arrested and charged for driving under the influence of alcohol. About 10 000 people were given fines for driving without licences or failing to produce a driver's licence.

A total of 8000 people were charged for failing to wear seatbelts. More than 10 000 vehicles were found to be

Statistics on the actual numbers of crashes and fatalities over this period are still being verified. You will understand that this is a mammoth task involving all police stations where fatal crashes are reported.

We are extremely concerned about the trends that we have noticed over this period. We have noted that pedestrians constituted 40.3% of road users killed in the crashes followed by passengers at 31.8%. Drivers constituted 24.2% of fatalities. This points to the fact that most crashes are not occurring on the national and provincial roads. They are actually happening in build-up areas, in townships and villages.

Of serious concern is the involvement of light motor vehicles and light delivery vehicles in fatal crashes. Light motor vehicles were involved in 48.4% of the crashes followed by light delivery vehicles at 22.9%. Minibusses or combis contributed 6.5% and articulated trucks contributed 4,4% of the crashes.

As a collective charged with law enforcement and the promotion of road safety, we have therefore decided to make the following interventions to manage the situation and mitigate against the spiralling fatalities during this period.

We have agreed to make this Christmas weekend very difficult for disobedient road users. We will be deploying law enforcement officers into residential areas and places of entertainment where 44% of crashes have occurred.

We will also be stepping road safety education and awareness among pedestrians and passengers.

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