



**MINISTER OF TRANSPORT DR BLADE NZIMANDE ON
OCCASION OF THE RELEASE OF THE PRELIMINARY
2018 FESTIVE SEASON ROAD SAFETY STATEMENT
AT GCIS TSHEDIMOSSETSO HOUSE PRETORIA**

16 January 2019

Deputy Minister Sindisiwe Lydia Chikunga

MECs

RTMC Board Chairman Mr. Zola Majavu

Members of RTMC Board and other Boards present

Acting Director General Mr. Chris Hlabisa

RTMC CEO Advocate Makhosini Msibi

CEO's of other Transport Agencies

Chairperson of Youth in Road Safety and Transport, Mr
Sam Masango

Head of Departments

Traffic Chiefs

Officials from the three spheres of government and entities

Members of the media

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Festive Season has offered us an opportunity to enjoy quality time with our loved ones and to reflect on the year “that was” and simultaneously to relax and recharge in preparation for this year.

We all travelled the length and breadth of our beautiful country assured of our safe return, free from injury, death and or any pain or loss caused by fellow road users.

However, our behaviour and conduct on the roads is inconsistent and incongruent to this sanctified “right to life” as enshrined in our Constitution. Our cherished priced motor vehicle have become killing machines on our roads, more especially during the Festive season.

It is unfortunate that some of our road users could not live to see their cherished dreams unfold, as their lives were unnecessarily cut short by irresponsible and unpatriotic conduct of other road users.

On behalf of the Government of South Africa and in particular the transport family, we send our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the families of those that died on our roads and rail transportation and to those families that are still in mourning due to the senseless killings of their loved ones.

Those that are recuperating in hospitals and at home we wish them a speedy recovery.

We further recognise that we lost our own members in the line of duty during the festive season. May the souls of the late Joseph Mabuza, spokesperson for Mpumalanga department of community safety, security and liaison, Gauteng traffic officer, Napoleon Segobela, and Constable

Thembi Lunic Phadziri from the SAPS rest in eternal peace. Their deaths were not in vain. It was in service of the nation and in humanity.

We also like to thank the unflinching willingness by some South Africans who heeded our clarion call and contributed towards road safety by obeying the rules of the road and we urge them to continue to be exceptions to the norm). We wish to applaud these patriotic compatriots for putting (the interest of the country first and at heart.

Ladies and gentlemen

We have come out of a very challenging and difficult six-week period in which our resources were stretched to the limit.

However, our resilience and combat readiness fortified our determination to steadfastly roll out our road safety programmes, focusing on road safety education, road

infrastructure engineering, law enforcement and evaluation of the impact of our intervention.

At midnight on Tuesday 08 January 2019, we marked the end of the Festive Season Road Safety campaign that had been carried out by various provincial and municipal authorities since the of December 2018.

The festive season always place an added responsibility on traffic authorities who have the mammoth task of ensuring that road users comply with the rules of the road.

Although we undertake road safety as a 365-day business, we are always called upon to double-up our efforts when we approach the festive season. This is due to the obvious fact that there is remarkable increase in traffic volumes during this period.

The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) coordinates our national effort in partnership with the provincial and municipal traffic authorities, the South

African Police Service, emergency medical services and the Department of Health.

They work collaboratively to reduce and where possible eliminate the risk of crashes on our roads.

Working under very trying circumstances at times, they also monitor the deployment of traffic personnel on the roads and collate statistics on crashes, fatalities and law enforcement achievements.

Ladies and gentlemen

I also must mention that our road safety initiative is modelled around achieving the objectives of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. This is in response to the rapidly rising number of road related injuries and fatalities occurring in our country.

Let me restate what I said when we launched the 2018 Festive Season Road Safety Campaign at Modimolle in Limpopo:

“Road traffic fatalities are amongst the main causes of death in South Africa. This results in serious social and economic costs for the country. These consequences include the loss of family members who are bread winners and leave behind traumatized families. The economic ramifications include the increase in the social development and health budgets spent”.

This is amongst the reason that as government we are seeking for new partnerships and initiatives across sectors to address what the United Nations General Assembly calls ***“a major public health issue”.***

Our goal in implementing the **National Road Safety Strategy** is firstly to stabilize and then reduce road traffic fatalities. This Strategy is implemented through a plan that

is organized around a United Nations (UN) five-pillar approach to improve road safety.

The five pillars are:

- Road safety management;
- Infrastructure;
- Safe vehicles;
- Road user behaviour, and
- Post-crash response

The pillars which continuously require major attention are the road user behaviour and safe vehicles.

By their nature, these pillars are dependable on road users and vehicle owners.

In response to these, as government we are relentless in improving our road traffic laws, regulations and strategies.

We will also continue unabated in inculcating a culture of road safety awareness and taking responsibility by road users.

Government at all spheres will amongst others continue to partner with the Youth Formations, Interfaith Community, Road Freight Associations and the Taxi Industry to spread the culture of responsible road use.

We will further seek partnerships with Associations of taverns, liquor authorities, NGOs and CBOs to mention a few.

The roads branch in the Department of Transport, will lead in the coordination of our partnerships and direct the relevant partners to our road entities and provinces.

Ladies and gentlemen

As we noted when we released the mid-season report on December 22, 2018, we remain concerned about the

involvement of trucks and minibus vehicles in major horrific road crashes.

An analysis of these shows a disturbing trend where drivers from our neighbouring countries were involved in some of the major of crashes in which five or more people died.

These collisions took place in Bloemspruit Free State, White River in Mpumalanga, Tierpoort near Bloemfontein in Free State, Nsuzi near Appelbosch in KwaZulu Natal, Middelburg in Mpumalanga, Mookgophong in Limpopo, Clocolan in Free State and Tweespruit also in Free State. A total of **54** lives were lost in these crashes and the Free State province was the worst affected.

Evidence has also shown that drivers from our neighbouring countries were also involved in serious and flagrant violations of road traffic rules by excessively overloading their vehicles and driving un-roadworthy vehicles that pose a risk to other road users.

We will be engaging with their governments through the SADC Secretariat and other continental bodies with similar jurisdictions to ensure that we get their co-operation in dealing with the matter.

In addition, I have directed the RTMC conduct thorough investigation in each of the driving licence and testing centres (DLTCs) where South African nationals involved in these major crashes obtained their licences.

The centres and the examiners involved in issuing those documents have already been identified. Some of the identified DLTCs include Newcastle, Bethlehem, Mbombela, Komatipoort, Springbok, Zeerust, Johannesburg, Umtata, Boksburg, Stanger and Umhlabuyalingana.

We now need an understanding of how these centres operate to identify weakness in the system and address them. Consequences will follow if it can be established that process were flouted.

It is also important that we understand the context in which we undertook our festive season road safety campaign this year.

The World Health Organisation's Global Status Report on Road Safety, which was released in December 2018, shows that deaths from road traffic crashes have increased from 1.25 million to 1.35 million a year throughout the world.

The report notes that the world is far from meeting the goal of reducing the number deaths by 50% by the year 2020.

The report further states that 58% of road traffic deaths in South African involved alcohol and the seat-belt wearing rate is as low as 38% for drivers and 31% for front seated passengers.

The Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety will be held in Sweden in April 2020 to set a new agenda and target for fatalities for the next target.

The official vehicle population has grown tremendously and this has translated to an added burden on our road infrastructure network and law enforcement capacity.

In December 2017, we had at least **12 205 112** registered vehicles in the country. This had increased to **12 462 979** in December 2018, meaning that there were **257 867** more vehicles this festive season.

Also of interest is that in 2017, the number of driver's licenses issued were **12 658 135**. This number has since increased to **13 055 317** cumulatively, meaning that **397 182** new drivers were recently licensed to use our road networks.

While the overwhelming interest is understandably around the number of fatalities recorded over this period, it is also important to assess the genesis within which these crashes occur, and get all of us to understand each road user's responsibility.

It must be understood that the Department of Transport and its entities will always discharge their responsibility to disseminate messages and information about road safety without prejudice.

We continue to review our policies and legislation that are aimed at improving safety on our roads through proper infrastructure, ensuring safer vehicles, influence road user behaviour and ensuring proper post-crash response.

Road safety, primarily is an individual road user's responsibility. Once this notion is lost on any road user: motorists, passengers and pedestrians alike, the battle against road carnages will be undermined.

The carnages we continue to experience on our roads are instigated by a number of factors mostly embedded in human behaviour and vehicle factors as already stated.

Some of these factors are as follows:

- Alcohol and substance abuse;
- Reckless and negligent driving;
- Un-roadworthy vehicles;
- Overtaking on blind-rises, barrier lines and in areas of poor visibility;
- A total disregard for rules of the road,
- Corruption;
- Distracted driving – where drivers use cellphones while driving;
- Lack of courtesy towards other road users;
- Failure to use seatbelts (buckling up) and child restraints;
- Overloading;
- Fatigue caused by failure to rest at periodic intervals, and
- Stray animals on our roads, particularly in rural areas.

One of the major disturbing elements emerging from the information gathered thus far is the vulnerability of passengers.

At least **36 percent** of people dying from road-related incidents this year were passengers. This is an increase from **34 percent** recorded last year and it reflects the number of high occupancy vehicles, particularly minibus vehicle that were involved in fatal crashes.

Pedestrian fatalities have shown a **two percent (2%)** decrease from **37 percent** last year to **35 percent** this year while driver fatalities remained at **27 percent** and cyclist at **two percent**.

Pedestrian vulnerability manifests itself in the following ways:

- Drinking and walking, including jaywalking;
- Wrong and dangerous crossing of the road;

- Informal settlements situated alongside busy roads and intersections;
- Walking on and crossing of highways, and
- Failure to wear visible clothing at night.

The preliminary figures for this past festive season indicate that we have managed to reduce crashes and fatalities from what it was at mid-point of the festive period.

It will be remembered that at the mid-point of the season in December last year, we reported that crashes had increased by **five percent (5%)** and fatalities by **16 percent**.

However, following intervention focusing on removing overloaded trailers from the roads through “***Operation Malayisha***”, the increased law enforcement operations and the introduction of the 24/7 shift and the rollout of the **Evidential Breath Alcohol Test (EBAT)** to deal with drink driving, we managed to reduce crashes by **two percent (2%)** and **seven percent (7%) for fatalities**.

While this is not a cause for celebration, we however believe that the situation could have been worse had we not made the necessary interventions to contain the situation.

Although we have not succeeded in achieving the goal of a 10% reduction in fatalities over this period, we shall not despair. We will continue to take incremental steps until we reach our goal.

Former South African Communist Party leader, Joe Slovo, who life we are celebrating this month advised us to:

“Trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement.”

Ladies and gentlemen

According to preliminary figures, crashes recorded in the recent festive season total **1 286**, regrettably and unfortunately resulting in **1 612 fatalities** nationwide.

The provincial breakdown is as follows:

Province	Number of Crashes	Number of Fatalities
Eastern Cape	195	238
Free - State	95	159
Gauteng	208	219
Kwazulu - Natal	267	328
Limpopo	138	178
Mpumalanga	123	162
Northern - Cape	42	54
North - West	93	125
Western - Cape	125	149

A comparison of this year's statistics with the same period last year depicts that **the Northern Cape, Free State and**

Eastern Cape recorded the highest percentage increases in **fatalities**.

This resulted in an **80 percent** increase in Northern Cape from **30 to 54** fatalities. The Free State increased by **28 percent** moving from **124** fatalities in the previous year to **159** this year, while the Eastern Cape recorded a **22 percent** increase moving from **195** fatalities to **238**.

Gauteng and the **North West** are the only provinces that recorded percentage decreases in the number of fatalities.

Gauteng recorded a commendable **19 percent** decrease while the North West recorded only a **two percent** decrease

We remain concerned about the incalcitrant attitude of our road users as the statistics show that human factors account for **ninety percent (90%)** of contributory factors to fatal crashes compared to vehicle factors that contributed

four percent while road and environmental factors contributed **six percent (6%)**.

Our relative success in preventing an overwhelming escalation in fatalities in this period can be attributed to interventions we undertook after the mid-season review on December 22, 2018.

These included law enforcement blitzes that focused on overloaded trailers.

These vehicles were stopped and prevented from leaving their points of departure within South Africa and others were stopped at the border gates.

We also increased law enforcement patrols and visibility of on major routes such as the N1, N3 and N4.

As a result of these interventions, there was no major crash with multiple fatalities on the N1 between Bela-Bela and

Polokwane and a total of **1021** un-roadworthy vehicles with overloaded trailers were discontinued.

Consequently:

- There were 775 roadblocks conducted compared to 440 the previous year;
- 1 358 619 vehicles were stopped and checked compared to 1 281 062 the previous year;
- 765 009 notices were issued compared to 290 023 the previous year;
- 4 016 vehicles were discontinued compared to 3 809 the previous year;
- 2 967 vehicles were impounded compared to 2 808 the previous year;

- 8 507 motorists were arrested compared to 6441 the previous year (2223 arrests were for drunk driving and 775 for speeding).

Our focused attention on corruption resulted in the arrest of 17 officials implicated in the fraudulent issuing of learner licences and roadworthy certificates.

The officials were arrested in Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo.

In addition, four motorists were arrested in separate incidents in the Western Cape, Gauteng and Mpumalanga for trying to bribe traffic officials.

The collective and collaborative efforts of our stakeholders paid off remarkably, with the Faith Based Community who used their religious platforms to spread the road safety message.

The Department of Transport and the Road Traffic Management Corporation will be meeting next month to discuss further urgent interventions that need to be implemented to reduce the carnage on our roads.

These discussions will centre on key policy interventions that are required to strengthen traffic law enforcement throughout the country.

These interventions will include amongst others:

- the implementation of the AARTO Act and the demerit point system;
- the re-classification of road traffic offences to Schedule 5 of the Criminal Procedure Act. This includes quest for a mandatory minimum sentence for 'drunken driving, inconsiderate, reckless and negligent driving;
- the engagements with the South African Police Services and the Justice Department on the conditions

for the granting of bail particularly on motorist caught speeding;

- the intensification of the National Traffic Anti-Corruption Unit sting operation in collaboration with the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) at Driver and Learner Testing centres, at vehicle testing centres and driving schools. This will be undertaken to establish their adherence to regulations and standards and to deal with instances of fraud and corruption; and
- the rollout the road safety curriculum at basic education level is also underway, with the curriculum having been finalized.
- the implementation plan for the introduction of the driving school instructor course. The South African Qualification Authority registered this groundbreaking qualification in December last year. The RTMC will work closely with driving schools to improve safety on

the roads by ensuring the production of competent drivers.

We will also seek an urgent engagement with our counterparts from neighbouring countries to discuss how we can strengthen cross-border transportation of goods and people.

On behalf of the Shareholders Committee comprising all Transport and Safety MECs from all the provinces, I thank all our law enforcement officers in all spheres of government, the SAPS, Emergency Medical Services, our private sector partners and road safety activists and volunteers for their commitment and relentless campaigns.

Thank you also to the media who have partnered with us in spreading the word and encouraging responsible behaviour. Please continue working with us to help fight this scourge.

Most of all, I thank all road users who heeded the message of road safety and we urge all of them to continue to be road safety ambassadors.

To those who are still refusing to comply, your days are numbered. It is just a matter of time before we catch you and remove you from our roads for you are a danger to yourselves and society at large.

Together we can make South African roads safer.

Ngiyabonga