



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,
FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF
THE 2021 EASTER SAFETY CAMPAIGN ON 29 MARCH 2021
AT BAPO BA MOGALE TRIBAL AUTHORITY, NORTH-WEST
AT 10h00**

Deputy Minister, Mme Dikeledi Magadzi

MEC for Community Safety & Transport Management in the
North-West, Mr Sello Lehari

Director-General Mr Alec Moemi

Chairperson of the Board of the RTMC, Mr Zola Majavu

Members of RTMC Board present

CEO of the RTMC, Advocate Makhosini Msibi

Traffic Chiefs

Government Officials representing all spheres of government

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we launch the 2021 Easter Road Safety Campaign, we do so under the shadow of a dark cloud, which is a stark reminder of why we should redouble our efforts to arrest the carnage on our roads. A little more than 48 hours ago, 6 people lost their lives after two vehicles collided on the R30 outside Welkom in the Free State on Sunday morning.

A BMW travelling towards Welkom and a Toyota Avanza travelling towards Theunissen collided just before 7am. A mother and her two toddlers and a man all travelling in the Avanza died on the scene. The driver of the BMW and a woman who was a passenger also died on the scene.

This is a tragedy that could have been avoided. We must work harder to reverse the tide and preserve human life on our roads. Through collaborative effort, we can find new and creative ways to make decisive interventions in this regard. We simply cannot continue using the same tactics that have not worked in the past, hoping to achieve different results. Let us embrace the opportunities presented by the 4th industrial revolution and leverage on the new frontiers technology has presented to fight this cancer of reckless conduct that results in the loss of life and limb on our roads.

The disruptor effect of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges, not only to the economy, but to the day to day operations in many sectors, including Transport. The relentless assault and threat to human life by the COVID-19 pandemic requires of us to sustain our vigilance and not give in to fatigue in adhering to health protocols and embracing the new normal.

This Easter will see increased volumes on our roads and across our land borders with neighbouring countries, as citizens and tourists use this period to engage in social, cultural and religious activities. All road users are enjoined to adhere to health protocols, and we expect they will observe these with the same vigour they are expected to employ in adhering to the rules of the road.

As the country gears up for the Easter period, it is important to once more, highlight the significance of Road Safety. Our roads are meant to enable access to both economic activities as well as social infrastructure and amenities. However, many-a-life is lost because of unbecoming conduct by those who choose to be reckless and undermine the rights of other with their conduct. It is truly tragic that the majority of those whose lives are lost during the Easter period, are the pedestrian youth between the ages of 20 and 34 years.

The 4-day Easter weekend is period where we lose no less than 230 lives each year. In 2020, despite the hard lockdown and travel restrictions, 38 people lost their lives.

It is important for us to take note that the majority of fatal crashes occur at night. More than 70% of the hit and runs happen at night.

We encourage road users to avoid travelling at night, not only to observe the curfew hours, but also keep safe from the hazards that are mostly prevalent at night.

From the road crash information analysed, one in five fatal crashes are simply single vehicles overturning. This is driven by various contributory factors, which include excessive speeding, fatigue, drinking and driving, driving under the influence of narcotics as well as overloading of passengers and goods.

Road Safety is our collective responsibility. It is equally through collective effort that we can force a change in our behaviour on the road. We are not only eroding the critical talent that our country is in desperate need of to grow the economy and a productive nation, but we are continually adding the cost of crashes, which the RTMC estimated at R143 billion in 2020.

The road is a shared space. Pedestrians, cyclists, passengers and drivers need to understand that. Adherence to the rules of the road will not only enhance our nation's ability to grow the economy, but it will also ensure that our roads do not become graveyards. It is time we raise the bar in our fight to arrest carnage on the roads.

As alluded to earlier, pedestrians remain the most vulnerable road users, who are most likely to be fatally wounded in a crash. As a pedestrian, if you have to go out after dusk, ensure you wear bright clothing so that you are visible.

We understand that safety on our roads will not improve unless we improve law enforcement and ensure that the culture of impunity on the roads is a thing of the past. Those who break the rules must understand that the long arm of the law will find you and will have to face the consequences for their behaviour.

We have been making gradual progress over the years, and we continue to close the loopholes that errant motorists rely on to evade the might of the law. A few years ago, when we introduced the evidential breath alcohol testing technology, errant motorist realised that the jig was up. Now people know that results from alcohol testing are immediate and chances of being convicted for drunk driving are much higher than they have ever been before because of the latest technology used by our officers.

Today as we launch the Easter Arrive Alive readiness campaign, we are again showcasing new technology that will be deployed to further assist our law enforcers to be more effective in their work.

We are now ready to issue our traffic officers with body cameras to support them in evidence gathering and improve the conviction rate for violations of traffic laws. As the RTMC rolls out the use of body cameras within the fraternity over the next 3 to 5 years, we aim to improve the levels of service and ensure that this is executed to serve and protect our road users.

These cameras will further act as a deterrent for corruption, effectively preventing officers from soliciting or accepting bribes from motorists. Every interaction a traffic law enforcement officer has with a motorist will be recorded.

Starting this Easter, there will be nowhere to hide for those who live beyond their means and finance their lavish lifestyles through bribes, at the expense of law abiding citizens on the roads.

Traffic law enforcement will stop being an enrichment scheme for the unethical, unscrupulous, greedy and corrupt officers who undermine our efforts to bring discipline on our roads and arrest the carnage.

We also have plans to strengthen our e-law enforcement by investing in drones.

These drones will assist us to proactively identify hazards on the roads, and to identify motorists who are re driving recklessly and at unacceptable high speeds. Officers will then be deployed strategically to respond using the live intelligence supplied by this technology. I must, however, hasten to add that consultations are still ongoing with the justice crime prevention and security cluster to ensure that evidence gathered through the use of these drones is admissible and leads to a higher conviction rate.

To our law enforcement officers: You have the ability to protect our people by enforcing the law. I urge you to use your powers to enforce the law and to efficiently use the resources that have been provided to you to make our roads safer. Corruption in the traffic fraternity contributes to unsafe road conditions and the high number of deaths on our roads. Your behaviour must be exemplary and must inspire the next generation of traffic officers.

I thank you.