



STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT MR JOE MASWANGANYI ON THE OCCASION OF THE RELEASE OF THE 2017 PRELIMINARY EASTER ROAD SAFETY FIGURES AT THE GCIS TSHEDIMOSETSO HOUSE IN HATFIELD- PRETORIA

21 April 2017

Deputy Minister Sindisiwe Chikunga
North West MEC for Community Safety & Transport Management, Dr. Mpho Motlhabane,
Limpopo MEC for Transport, Safety and Security, Ms Nandi Ndalane
Mpumalanga MEC for Community Safety, Security and Liaison, Mr Pat Ngomane
Gauteng MEC for Community Safety, Ms Sizakele Nkosi -Malobane,
Western Cape MEC for Transport and Public Works, Mr Donald Grant
RTMC Board Chairman, Mr Zola Majavu
Members of the RTMC board and other Boards present
Acting Director General, Mr Mathabatha Mokonyama
Deputy Director General, Mr Chris Hlabisa
RTMC CEO, Advocate Makhosini Msibi
CEOs of other Transport Entities
Division: Visible Policing, Brigadier EH Mahlabane
Heads of Departments
Traffic Chiefs
Officials from the three spheres of government and entities
Members of the media
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

It is fitting and appropriate on an occasion like this, when we have come together to reflect on the tragic events that took place on our roads, that we take a moment of silence as a show of respect to those who have lost their lives. Can I ask that we all stand up and observe a moment of silence. Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the Department of Transport and all our road entities, we view road safety as a daily issue which we address through our dedicated 365 day program which is sustainable and consistent. The programme is structured to align with the United National Decade of Action for Road Safety Global Plan and the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

This Easter period saw a remarkable increase in the number of vehicles on our roads. The total number of registered vehicles on the 31st of March 2017 stood at **12 047 404** compared to **11 818 124** in the same period in 2016. The number of registered drivers had increase by **507 002** presenting a new total of **12 283 777**.

A total of **174 253** vehicles were stopped and checked with the intention to remove un-roadworthy vehicles from our roads in all provinces.

Human factor still remains a causal factor for most of the crashes during this Easter period. As we all know, this can be avoidable if we all prioritise road safety and use our roads responsibly.

Our statistics indicates that people who died on the roads this Easter were **passengers at 50%** followed by **pedestrians at 24.5%**, **drivers at 19,8%** and **cyclists at 5.7%**.

The vehicle types that made a high contribution to fatal crashes were **motorcars** and **LDV's** with contributions of **49%** and **20%** respectively. **Minibus** type vehicles contributed **7.6%** and **busses 1.1%** which indicates that most of the passengers who died were travelling in motorcars.

Most fatal crashes happened in the after-hours of the day, especially from **18:00 to 22:00** to the early hours. About **34%** of the daily crashes happened between **18:00 to 22:00**. However, other peaks were recorded between **01:00 – 02:00**, **06:00 – 7:00 – 8:00** and **11:00 – 12:00**.

In total the number of fatalities increased by **79 (51%)** from **156** over the same period the previous year to **235** this year. However this year's fatalities are still significantly lower than the **333** fatalities recorded in 2015.

Our preliminary report shows that many people who died on our roads were victims of hit and run incidents, jaywalking or motorists who were driving at speeds that were too high for circumstances.

The report illustrates a new pattern in which crashes shifted from the identified historical hotspots into **new routes and build-up areas on times that previously did not have a high number of crashes**.

Very glaringly, most crashes and fatalities happened in **residential areas** and **remote areas** and very interestingly from **23h00 mid night until 05h00** in the morning. This new phenomenon requires of us to spread our wings jointly informed by uniform working norms and standards.

Our statistics show that fatalities increased in all provinces with exception of Free State:

- **Free State** recorded a **27%** decline in fatalities from 11 fatalities in 2016 to only 8 this year.

The other provinces recorded the following performance:

- **Eastern Cape:** recorded a **17%** increase in fatalities from 24 fatalities in 2016 to 27 this year.
- **Limpopo:** recorded a **30 %** increase in fatalities from 23 fatalities in 2016 to 30 this year.
- **Mpumalanga:** recorded a **33%** increase in fatalities from 21 fatalities in 2016 to 28 this year.

The highest increases have been recorded for the following provinces:

- **Northern Cape :** an increase of **7 (175%)** from **4 to 11**;
- **Kwa-Zulu Natal :** an increase of **31 (111%)** from **28 to 59**;
- **Gauteng :** an increase of **14 (58%)** from **24 to 38**;
- **Western Cape :** an increase of **8 (57%)** from **14 to 22**; and
- **North West :** an increase of **4 (50%)** from **8 to 12**

During this Easter period **61 340** motorists were charged with various offences including failing to wear seatbelts, use of cell phones while driving, speeding and overloading. More than **2 800** motorist were arrested for drunken driving, inconsiderate, reckless and negligent driving, possession of false document and driving without licences and public driver's permits.

Seven motorists were detained for driving at excessive speeds above 160 km an hour on 120 km zone. These included a motorist who was arrested on N6 in Reddersburg in the Free State driving at 227 km an hour while another was caught driving at 225 km an hour on the N1 in Pretoria. These are examples of the worst among the worst motorist who have no regard for road rules and the risk they pose to other motorists who obey the rules of the road.

Our courts will show them no mercy and will give them the harshest penalties permissible.

Ladies and gentlemen, to ensure that there are severe consequences for the road rule offenders, we are at an advance stage in negotiations with the Department of Justice to finalise the introduction of minimum sentences for negligent and reckless driving. This is done in order to seek the reclassify drunken driving from a Schedule 3, which is less severe to a more severe Schedule 5 offence to ensure that those who negligently cause crashes on the roads do not get bail easily and spend time behind bars.

The Department of Transport published amendments to the National Road Traffic Regulations in November last year aimed at regulating the transportation of persons in the load bay of light delivery vehicles for reward. The regulations will come into effect next month in May 2017 and they will assist in the reduction of the number of passengers dying in collisions.

Amongst the overarching intervention is the approval of the National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2030 by Cabinet. This addresses the challenges and gaps identified by the Department on the implementation of the previous road safety strategies.

Equally important, we have started a Parliamentary process led by the Portfolio Committee on Transport (PCoT) to extensively consult on the AARTO Amendment Bill which will introduce a demerits intended to improve the conduct and behaviour of drivers on the roads. We call upon all relevant stakeholders to participate in making submissions to the PCoT.

Building on the previous and recent experiences, the Department will continue to improve its enforcement policies and strategies, and upscale public road safety education and awareness campaigns, which is our key component and driver of our road safety strategy. We do so informed by the fact that road traffic injuries are a global problem affecting all sectors of the society and that they are a growing public health and social development problem. The burden also impacts heavily on our health system and social welfare where more and more people rely on our social security net for survival.

If all road users prioritise road safety, the resources that government spends unwittingly on accidents amounting 147 Billion Rands annually, which is equal to 3.4% of the country's GDP. Over and above this figure the **Road Accident Fund** spends **R33 Billion** annually on payments of claims, which could be redirected to other government priorities which will go miles to address the triple challenges of employment, poverty and inequalities, thereby assisting us to increase the pace to achieve government radical socio-economic transformation.

Ladies and gentlemen, despite these grim statistics, it is important to note that thousands of travellers obeyed the rules of the road and reached their destinations safely. I would like to commend those who co-operated with our law enforcement officers, travelled within acceptable speed limits, wore their seatbelts and avoided alcohol.

We must always remember that improving road safety is a long term project that requires the active participation of all citizens and interested formations.

Although law enforcement did everything to plan for a safer Easter period and authorities deployed their resources on the roads, ultimately the responsibility for safety rests on the shoulders of all us as road users. I therefore call on all citizens to exercise this responsibility to make South African roads safe.

I thank you.