



# transport

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Department:  
Transport  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**Date: Monday, 01 October 2018**

**To: All Media**

**Attention: News Editors / Transport Reporters**

**For Immediate Use**

### **MINISTER OF TRANSPORT STATEMENT ON THE ARREST OF CRIMINALS VANDALISING METRORAIL SERVICES AND THE CALL BY THE DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY IN THE WESTERN CAPE METRORAIL**

The Minister of Transport, Dr Blade Nzimande, welcomes the sentencing of a man who was caught stealing overhead cables close to the Heideveld railway station in Manenberg in March 2018.

Minister Nzimande calls on the criminal justice system to impose harsher sentences to the more than hundred and fifty (150) other criminals awaiting trial for malicious damage and theft of Metrorail property.

“To date six (6) cases were finalised with a jail sentence between three (3) and thirty (30) years with no bail granted to the offenders,” said Minister Nzimande.

The Minister further slams the call by Western Cape Democratic Alliance to declare a state of emergency in the Western Cape Metrorail services whilst the national government is seized with work to restore Metrorail services in the province.

Minister Nzimande is also surprised by the DA government posturing because they are part and national task team consisting of all the three spheres of government to deal with the Metrorail challenges in the Western Cape.

“This call by the DA is dishonest, opportunistic and political manoeuvring that seeks to exploit the dire situation confronting rail services in the Western Cape. I rebut this political posturing in the strongest terms,” said Minister Nzimande.

Minister Nzimande said that rather than being armchair critics, the DA led government in the Western Cape must urgently deal with service delivery issues affecting our communities by providing decent housing, electricity; improve social infrastructure and services in predominantly areas where the working class and poor reside. This will go a long way to deal with the state of vagrancy and crimes targeted at the rail network.

The Minister pointed out that government invested billions in resuscitating rail services in the Western Cape. This acceleration of the rail recovery process is concomitant with the modernisation project of recapitalising old and obsolete rail assets.

“Our Re-signalling project including the new Train Control and Operations Centre at Bellville is already 60% completed and will cost R1.2 billion; our Station upgrades will cost R1.6 billion; Depot Modernisation R2.6 billion and thirty five (35) new train sets will cost R3 billion,” said Minister Nzimande.

The Minister said government immediate and urgent task is to stabilize and provide a predictable Metrorail service within current capacity, measured by increased ridership, customer satisfaction, efficiency and stringent security measures.

The level of gang-infestation and crime in the triangle Langa-Nyanga-Netreg is so pervasive that PRASA declared it a priority.

“Our railway line is currently being walled in both sides to prevent ingress onto the operating tunnel. The first phase between Nyanga and Lansdowne bridge was completed and currently contractors are hard at work at Netreg. The monetary value of the project if projected at R70 Million,” Minister Nzimande confirmed.

The Minister welcomes the establishment of a Joint law enforcement unit, focusing on keeping commuters and infrastructure safe. This follows the memorandum of agreement signed by PRASA, City of Cape Town, and the Western Cape government in May 2018. PRASA has paid its share of about R16 Million.

“This Joint Law Enforcement unit will help us to clamp down on the so called "bucket shops" – illegal scrap dealers who continue to trade, providing cash for copper,” said Minister Nzimande”

PRASA has also implemented additional security measure to the value of R40 million to safeguard commuters, Metrorail staff and assets.

Amongst others security measures:

(1) eighty-eight (88) additional armed guards are deployed to escort train crew members and commuters on area central trains;

(2) Armed tactical team with armoured vehicles are deployed to protect assets and teams in the Bonteheuwel spilt;

(3) Private investigations team are appointed to assist with special forensic investigation capabilities and intelligence to combat cable theft and vandalism in order to improve conviction in respect of perpetrators arrested for cable/copper theft;

(4) Drone surveillance technology is deployed to combat cable theft and vandalism.

“Through these tactical operations combined with technology, we will be able to deter, detect, respond, apprehend, conclusively and successfully prosecute the perpetrators,” the Minister said.

In view of progress made in improving rail safety and Metrorail services, Minister Nzimande will continue to engage the Minister of Police, the Cabinet Criminal Justice cluster; the MECs responsible for Transport in all Metrorail operated provinces, organised business, labour and civil society to find collective solutions to challenges facing Metrorail.

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