



**MINISTER OF TRANSPORT DR BLADE NZIMANDE ON
THE RELEASE OF THE MID FESTIVE SEASON
PRELIMINARY ROAD SAFETY REPORT AT THE GCIS
TSHEDIMOSSETSO BUILDING, PRETORIA**

20 December 2018

RTMC 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

Head of Departments

Traffic Chiefs

Officials from the three spheres of government and entities

Members of the media

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

You would all be aware that we launched the festive season Road Safety Awareness Campaign on the N1 between Mokgopong and Kranskop on November 18, 2018.

We release the statistics from 1 December because we officially take this day as the beginning of the festive season, ending with the opening of schools on 9 January 2019.

Giving updates in the middle of the festive season, and just ahead of the major year end holidays, also acts as means of heightening awareness about road safety.

The preliminary report we are releasing today, tell a story about road safety in our country, particularly during this season of festivities.

It is more befitting and appropriate, as we come to the midpoint of the festive season, to step back and reflect on what we have achieved up to so far. We are doing this review in order to prepare ourselves for the challenging period ahead.

We are aware that we are approaching Christmas and New Year's Day long weekends.

We are expecting traffic volumes to increase dramatically from tomorrow, as millions will be travelling home to be with their families or to holiday destinations for Christmas Day festivities.

We anticipate that more people will be travelling again on December 28 in preparation for New Year's Day.

The last peak travel period will be on the weekend of January 5 and 6, 2019 when travellers are expected to return to their homes and places of work for the re-opening of industries and schools.

It is sad to note that we have witnessed a period of unparalleled mixture of agony, misery and pain on our roads from December 1 to 18 this year.

The most prevalent violations include excessive speeding, reckless and negligent driving and blatant disregard of road signs.

Drinking and driving increases and a combination of fatigue and un-roadworthy vehicles become lethal problems particularly on long distance travelers.

Pedestrians movements have also increased on our freeways and roads in semi urban, urban and built up areas.

On the social front, party revelers take their excitement to the streets and other social and entertainment spaces, where alcohol abuse becomes a common often resulting in high number of fatalities and injuries on our roads, due to increased instances of drunken driving.

It is therefore prudent that I use this opportunity to convey our heartfelt condolences to the families who lost loved ones during this period and our well wishes to all those who are still recuperating in hospitals as well as at home.

I also convey a word of gratitude and appreciation to all law enforcement officers, emergency services and health professionals who work long hours, sacrificing family time, to help us save lives on South African roads.

I also wish to specially recognize and applaud all those road users who obey the rules and regulations on road safety, whether they are drivers, passengers or pedestrians.

My attention has today been brought to the suspension and disciplinary charges brought against a driver of one of the Inter ape buses who was overtaking on a barrier line. This driver was exposed through a video clip taken by one of the passengers in the bus. We therefore continue to urge

passengers to be alert especially about reckless driving and take action and/or report such at the next available moment.

We also wish to urge drivers to desist from alerting other drivers on law enforcement activities by our officers on the roads. I particularly wish to condemn those who use social media to undermine law enforcement activities on our roads, by alerting reckless drivers on road blocks and vehicle testing.

I remind them that our work is not yet done. We have a massive challenge ahead us and the whole country is looking upon us to stem the tide of crashes on the roads and contain the carnage of road traffic fatalities.

I am aware that some officers fell in the line of duty during this period. Our condolences also goes to their families, friends and colleagues.

However, we remain unrelenting and resolute through it all and we shall prevail against all the odds.

It is also important to note that the festive season programme is not implemented in isolation, but forms part of an ongoing 365 day road safety programme of campaigns that the Department of Transport, its agencies carried out in conjunction with transport stakeholders and the general public throughout the year to ensure that lives are saved.

A significant amount of financial resources have been invested to promote awareness and to intensify enforcement and up-scale general traffic officer visibility.

Awareness campaigns were launched and are still running across different media platforms, including radio, television, newspapers and below the line media. I grateful for the support that the private sector has given to our campaign.

I have been extremely concerned about the high number of public and freight transport vehicles involved in fatal crashes so far in the festive season. When these vehicles

get involved in crashes, the number of fatalities increases phenomenally.

A total number of 34 minibus vehicles have been involved in fatal collisions since the start of the festive season while 44 trucks were involved in deadly collisions.

These vehicles were involved in single vehicle overturning, head-on and head to rear collisions which strongly suggests that drivers were unable to control the vehicles due to fatigue and the vehicles veered onto oncoming traffic or they were unable to stop the vehicles on time to avoid collisions because of high speed.

What stands out quite glaringly is that many vehicles involved in fatal crashes had a high number of occupants and with most crashes occurring between **19H00 and 20H00** and between **22H00 and 23H00**. Since December the 1st, the majority of crashes happened on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Light motor cars contributed **47%** to the total crashes followed by **light delivery vehicles** at a contribution of **21%** and **minibus vehicles** with a contribution of **7%** and trucks **5%**.

I call on minibus and truck operators to step their efforts to reduce the number of crashes involving their vehicles.

Since the beginning of our heightened road safety programme, we have 44 fatalities from crashes involving five minibus taxis and trucks.

Minibus operators must consider having two drivers to relieve each during long distance journeys to avoid fatigue. This is a small price to pay to avoid the untold misery and pain that families and society.

I welcome the strides that have been made by the Road Traffic Management Corporation's National Anti-Corruption Unit and the Directorate of Priority Crimes Investigation (the

Hawks) to reduce to corruption in the issuing of learner driving licences and roadworthy certificates.

Nine people, were arrested when these anti-corruption units raided two centres during this period.

Five people were arrested in KwaZulu Natal when a learner driver centre was raided in Underberg on December the 7th, 2018.

Four others were arrested in Daveyton, Gauteng when a private company that produces roadworthy certificates was raided on December the 14th, 2018.

I must however express my disquiet about the recycling of corrupt officers within the traffic law enforcement fraternity.

Officers who are fingered in corrupt activities seem to find it easy to change employment between authorities moving from provincial departments to municipalities and the other way around.

This practice must stop as it is eroding public confidence in the traffic law enforcement fraternity and undermines our effort to deal decisively with corruption within the sector.

I urge the MECs to follow-up on these cases and ensure that departmental steps are taken to hold these officers to account.

The permits of private companies implicated in wrongly issuing roadworthy certificates must be withdrawn and these centres must be prevented from operating.

Ladies and gentlemen

Our traffic law enforcement officers conducted more than **356** roadblocks throughout the country during this period and they issued **326 642** fines for various traffic offences.

Of particular interest is that **10 666** of these fines were for drivers who did not have a driving license while **9 620** were for drivers who did not fasten seat belts, **8 481** for driving unlicensed vehicles, **5 811** for driving vehicles with worn tyres and **3 039** for overloading of goods.

About **1 402** un-roadworthy vehicles were suspended or discontinued while **1 310** other motor vehicles were impounded.

To clamp down on drunken driving, speed and other moving violation, the officers arrested more about **2 837** motorists and **1109 of them, which is 39%** was for drunken driving.

A total of **5 drivers** were arrested for driving at excessive speeds of between **189 km per hour** to well over **200 km**

per hour. The highest speedster was arrested in **the Free State** travelling at **228 km** an hour on the N3 near Warden.

The highest number of fatalities have been recorded among passengers at 39% highlighting the importance of using safety belts and the involvement of public transport in the crashes.

Pedestrian fatalities were recorded at **33%** while drivers constituted **31%** and the status of **1%** was undetermined.

Collisions involving jay-walking pedestrian have increased to 44% this year followed by hit and run (17%) as well as speeds that were too high for circumstances (14%) and overtaking in the face of oncoming traffic (10%).

This is the reason why human factors contributed **86.7%** to the occurrence of fatal crashes while road factors contributed **8.7%** and vehicle factors **4.6%**.

Ladies and gentlemen

This preliminary report for the mid-festive season period show that road fatalities have increased in all provinces except for Gauteng that has recorded a 10% decrease.

We want to congratulate the MEC for the sterling work and encourage her to put in more effort in the coming days to sustain and this reduction.

The highest percentage increase was recorded in the Northern Cape province with 71%, followed by Free State with 53% and Kwa-Zulu Natal with 46%.

A total of **767 fatalities** have been recorded so far in this festive period which is a **16%** increase on the previous period.

KwaZulu Natal with **162** fatalities recorded the highest number of fatalities, followed by Gauteng at **125**. Limpopo and Eastern Cape had **89** fatalities each, while

Mpumalanga had **82**, Western Cape **81**, Free State **78**, North West **57** and Northern Cape **24**.

It is worth noting that the **Northern Cape** has the lowest number of fatalities although its percentage increase is the highest.

The gender mostly affected was males with a contribution of 72% to total fatalities. Very disturbingly, the contribution of females has increased from 23% to 27% while the incidents where the gender could not be determined have been reduced from 5% to 1%.

Law enforcement operation will be stepped up and public safety campaigns up scaled to turn the situation around. Specific interventions, going forward, will include:

- I. Intensifying law enforcement operations on key travelling dates with a specific focus on speeding, drunken driving and the wearing of seatbelts.

- II. The activation of more half way stations for the management of fatigue. This must be targeted at long distance public transport vehicles
- III. An urgent meeting with the department of justice and the National Prosecution Authority to ensure that serious cases involving violations of traffic law are prosecuted expeditiously to send a strong message of errant road users that there is a zero tolerance to transgressions of road rules.
- IV. In the long-term, we must have an engagement with the Department of Trade and Industry to review the trading hours of taverns and restaurants where liquor is sold. We believe that the 2am cut-off time encourages binge drinking and increases the risk of road traffic crashes in the early hours of the morning
- V. Our cross-border operations will be strengthened to deal with the high incidents of cross-border minibus

vehicles that are overloaded with both passengers and goods.

As I conclude, I want thank those that have been law-abiding road users who made it to their destinations without any incident.

I urge those who are planning to travel in the coming days to emulate the good example set by these patriots and adhere to the rules of the road; drive within the set speed limit, buckle up, avoid the use of cell phones while driving, use roadworthy vehicles, remain calm, take regular stops to avoid fatigue and avoid the use of alcohol while driving.

Ladies and gentlemen

Achieving the goals that we have set as the Department for the greater safety of all South Africans is a long term programme. It will require greater co-operation between the Department and all citizens.

We have committed ourselves to a reduction of fatalities in our country and we shall achieve it by enforcing the law rigorously every day, ensuring that we act without fear or favour and maintaining constant high levels of visibility on all hazardous routes.

I thank the MECs and call on them to take charge of the situation and pull the country back from the edge of an abyss that we are facing if nothing is done to curb the escalation in road traffic crashes.

We take solace in our understanding that the rate of increase in fatalities and injuries will be brought down if we all act with urgency from now onwards and tighten the monitoring of our law enforcement operations.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to confront lawlessness and rogue usage of our roads.

I wish to remind all our stakeholders and road users that we all shoulder the responsibility to ensure that we are always

safe on our roads as well as always jealously protecting one another. Remember we are in this together and together we shall win this battle.

I thank you.