Transport Minister Fikile Mbalula has held virtual discussions with the National Taxi Alliance (NTA) on the COVID-19 national lockdown regulations and the directions thereof.

The Minister noted the grievances of the taxi industry, which included alleged heavy-handed law enforcement and illegal profiteering by trucks and other vehicles ferrying passengers.

Minister Mbalula also raised concerns about reports of taxi fare increments of up to 100% in some parts of the country, insufficient sanitization as well as sporadic incidents of overloading and breaching of travel times.

The Minister did however acknowledge that infringements were in the minority and that by and large, the sector has complied with the directions on carrying capacity, operating times and the use of personal protective equipment.

Minister Mbalula noted the dire effects of the lockdown on the taxi industry and indicated that intergovernmental consultations on a Taxi Industry Relief Efforts are at an advanced stage. The Departments of Transport, small Business, Labour, Trade Industry and Competition as well as National Treasury have agreed to support the industry and are currently looking at various modalities of assistance.

Today’s discussions also extended to broader issues such as the formalization and subsidization of the taxi industry as well as the National Taxi Indaba scheduled to take place later this year.

The NTA has welcomed the Minister’s remarks.

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