



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

MEDIA STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE RELEASE OF THE 2020 FESTIVE SEASON STATISTICS ON 19 JANUARY 2021 AT 10H00 AT ELDORADO PARK, N12 HIGHWAY

Deputy Minister, Mme Dikeledi Magadzi

Members of the Executive Council

Director-General, Mr Alec Moemi

Chairperson of the RTMC Board, Mr Zola Majavu

Members of the Board of the RTMC

CEO of the RTMC, Adv Makhosini Msibi

Provincial Heads of Department

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

May I request we observe a moment of silence, in solemn remembrance of our colleague and dedicated champion of road safety, MEC Bheki Ntuli, who recently passed due to COVID-19 complications. Let us also remember the unsung heroes and heroines, the traffic officers who succumbed to COVID-19 in the line of duty, and all other colleagues who are no longer with us.

Over the past six weeks commencing from 1 December 2020 to 11 January 2021, we conducted one of the most challenging road safety campaigns ever undertaken in recent history.

It was a period characterised by a high number of COVID-19 infections among traffic officers, incessant rainfall and a moderate decline in traffic volumes.

Five hundred and eighteen (518) traffic officers have tested positive for COVID-19 and had to be isolated while seventeen (17) passed away during the period under review. This, together with the Disaster Management regulations, severely curtailed our ability to undertake face-to-face activities that we normally do to promote road safety education and awareness.

Traffic volumes declined from 1 556 704 the previous year, to 1 419 782 this year.

The N3 was the busiest route with an increase in traffic volumes from 951 833 in the previous period to 987 596. There was a significant decline in traffic volumes on the N4, with 110 676 vehicles recorded as opposed to 208 883 vehicles recorded last year.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the wet weather conditions, our law enforcement officers were out in full force and conducted 2 937 roadblocks, where 1 379 191 vehicles were stopped. This resulted in 245 763 traffic fines being issued. A total of 7 309 vehicles were discontinued and 3 386 vehicles impounded. A total of 4 144 motorists were arrested for offences that include drunk driving, excessive speeding, violation of operating permits and possession of false documents.

We also executed high profile campaigns to raise public awareness on road safety. These include the ***Hoot Road Safety*** and the ***It's Not Just About You*** campaigns, which we executed with our private sector partners such as *Aware.org* and *Distel*. The Medical Research Council also assisted with travel protocols and guidelines.

While the numbers demonstrate that while the majority of South Africans respected the law and observed the curfew, a few intransigent motorists were on the road when they should not be. As a result, 34.1% of crashes happened during the curfew, between midnight and 06:00 in the morning.

More than half (54,3%) of fatal crashes occurred on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday, suggesting that the majority of crashes took place within residential areas long after travellers had reached their destinations.

There was a notable decline of 4.9% in the number of pedestrians who died on the roads compared to the previous year. However, driver fatalities increased from 24.2% to 26.9%, passenger fatalities increased from 32.2% to 34.5% while cyclist fatalities stood at one percent.

The main cause of crashes were jaywalking, hit and run, speeding, overtaking onto oncoming traffic, wet and slippery surfaces and tyre bursts.

We are encouraged to note that fewer minibus vehicles were involved in fatal crashes over this period. Minibus vehicles accounted for 8.2% of fatal crashes compared to 11.1% in the previous year.

We have noted with concern that heavy vehicles had an increased contribution to fatal crashes. Heavy vehicles, with a gross vehicle mass (GVM) greater 3500kg, were involved in 5.2% of fatal crashes compare to 3.7% last year.

Articulated trucks were involved in 4.7% of fatal crashes compared to 4.9% previously.

Light delivery vehicles accounted for 24.6% of fatalities compared to 22.2% in the previous year, while motorcycles accounted for 1.9% compared to zero in the previous year.

The overwhelming number of vehicles involved in fatal crashes are sedan and station wagons which accounted for 51.4% of fatal crashes compared to 51.9% last year.

Although we have recorded a decline in fatalities in 8 of the 9 Provinces, we fell short in achieving our ambitious 20% target we set for this festive season.

Overall, we recorded a total of 1 448 fatalities from 1 210 fatal crashes. This represents a 7% decline in fatalities and 10.3% decline in fatal crashes, year-on-year.

We are encouraged that these reductions make a positive contribution towards the realisation of our target of reducing fatalities on our roads. Mpumalanga is the only Province that recorded an increase in fatalities.

The breakdown of fatalities per Province is as follows:

- Western Cape recorded a decline of 15.9%, with 132 fatalities compared to 157 in 2019/2020.
- KwaZulu Natal recorded a decline of 14%, with 289 fatalities compared to 336 in 2019/20.
- Limpopo recorded a decline of 8.3%. with 188 fatalities compared to 205 in 2019/2020.
- Northern Cape recorded a decline of 7.7%, with 36 fatalities compared to 39 in 2019/2020.
- Gauteng recorded a decline of 7.2%, with 231 fatalities compared to 249 in 2019/20.
- North West recorded a decline of 2.0%, with 99 fatalities compared to 101 in 2019/2020.
- Eastern Cape recorded a decline of 1.3%, with 228 fatalities compared to 231 in 2019/20.
- Free State recoded a decline of 0.9%, with 107 fatalities compared to 108 in 2019/20.
- Mpumalanga recorded an increase of 4.4%, with 141 fatalities compared to 135 in 2019/2020.

The following roads accounted for the highest number of crashes and fatalities:

1. N3 near Harrismith, KwaZulu-Natal
2. N2 near Idutywa, Eastern Cape
3. N1 near Modimolle, Limpopo

4. R37 Mecklenburg, Limpopo
5. N12 near Potchefstroom, North-West

It is worth noting that the R71 near Mankweng has dropped from the number one spot to number nine pointing the success of the road safety campaign in Limpopo. The R573 Moloto Road, which is notorious for road crashes and fatalities does not appear in the top 20 of hazardous routes this year.

We are saddened to note that two of our own officers are among those who perished on the roads this year. Inspector Tefoamuel Motaung from the Free State died after he was knocked down by a minibus while on duty on the N3 near Villiers. Raymond Masango, a co-ordinator of traffic training delivery at the Road Traffic Management Corporation also died in a horrific multi-vehicle crash on the N3 near Harrismith.

I wish to convey my sincerest condolence to the families, friends and loved ones of all those who have perished on our roads. Similarly, I wish a speedy recovery to all those who have been injured and are recovering in hospital or at home.

While we have ended the festive season campaign on a positive note, we must however remember that our road safety campaign runs for 365 days, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. From here we are proceeding with the back-to-school leg of the campaign while we make preparation for the Easter peak travel period.

I call on all South Africans to join us in this worthy campaign to save life and limb and promote road safety every day of the year. Every road user must make road safety his or her business.

Allow me to convey a word of appreciation and gratitude to all law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, road safety ambassadors, private sector companies and non-governmental organisations that joined in the festive season campaign. Your valued contributions, gallant spirit and dedication is always appreciated.

Our steadfast resolve to fight the scourge of road carnage and make South Africa's roads safe is inspired by Ngugi wa Thiong'o who said, *"There is no night so long that it does not end with dawn,"* Our dawn is coming. We will prevail.

I wish you all a safe and prosperous New Year.

I thank you.