



**MINISTRY
TRANSPORT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Remarks by the Minister of Transport at the launch of the 2026 20 March to May 1st Road Safety Campaign on 20 March 2026 at Vosloorus, Gauteng

The Deputy Minister of Transport, Mr. Mkhuleko Hlengwa

MEC for Transport of Gauteng, Ms Kedibone Diale-Tlabela

Chairperson of the Transport Portfolio Committee, Honourable Donald Selamolela

Road Transport Entities Board Chairperson and Board Members

RTMC CEO Advocate Makhosini Msibi and CEOs of Road Transport Entities: RAF, SANRAL, C-BRTA and RTIA

Senior Managers from the Department of Transport, Provincial Governments, State Owned Entities.

Colleagues from non-governmental /civil society organisations including the private sector

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

We gather today as the nation prepares for major religious festivals including Eid-al -Fitr, the Passover Seder and the Easter period. This season is a time of spiritual reflection and family reunion, yet it remains one of the most hazardous times on our national road network.

Our mandate is clear: to ensure that every South African who sets out on a journey returns home safely.

With regard to progress in reducing road fatalities this year, we are pleased to report that we have seen encouraging signs. Preliminary data for the period 1 January to 15 March indicates the lowest number of fatalities in six years

The number of crashes in the period decreased by 11% compared to the same period in 2025. Every province has seen a decrease in the number of crashes.

Fatalities have decreased by 10% compared with the same period last year. Six provinces recorded decreases in fatalities: namely Gauteng, Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Mpumalanga, North West and Eastern Cape.

This progress was not accidental; it is the direct result of coordinated law enforcement, strategic partnerships with civil society, and a shift in the collective consciousness of our road users. However, we cannot rest on these laurels. As long as one family still receives a knock on the door with news of a tragedy, our work is not done.

For the next two months, we reaffirm our theme: "It Begins With Me". This is more than a slogan; it is an appeal for personal accountability. Over 80% of road crashes are the direct result of human behavior. We are calling on every driver, passenger, and pedestrian to take ownership of their conduct on our shared roads.

Our law enforcement strategy over this time will be uncompromising. I have directed all agencies to prioritise public and freight transport safety as well as pedestrians.

Current information on the NATIS system indicates that 342 048 vehicles - mainly minibuses, busses and trucks – are not roadworthy, while 338 659 professional driving permits have expired.

We are engaging with the taxi and bus industries to address these worrying figures and ensure vehicle roadworthiness. Vehicles found with defective brakes, smooth tyres or steering faults will be impounded immediately to protect passengers.

We want to register our concern at the number of Vehicle Testing Stations which are non-operational throughout the different provinces. The RTMC, working with the Department's Vehicle Testing Inspectorate, are instructed to facilitate a workable strategy to get all these facilities back to operation to ensure readiness during high volume traffic periods in future.

This year there will be a targeted focus on preventing pedestrians from crossing and walking on highways. We will also patrol areas of entertainment near highways to prevent inebriated pedestrians from running across major roads. Pedestrians currently account for almost half of all road deaths.

Traffic Authorities for the first time this year are instructed to deploy their students to patrol these national critical pedestrian locations and not release students to go home.

Our visibility in and around pedestrian accident-prone areas assisted by the communities and support from the SAPS will ensure that we keep the momentum of reducing road accidents and set us on our trajectory of achieving the road safety decade action target set for our country.

We continue our intensified focus on drunken driving. We are currently pursuing legislative amendments to Section 65 of the National Road Traffic Act to further tighten these restrictions.

High-risk routes, including the N1, N2, N3, and N4, will see an unprecedented saturation of mobile and static checkpoints, as we intensify traffic policing on critical corridors together with deployment of the National Traffic Police.

April is a time of increased mobility across our region, with heightened movement of passengers and freight between South Africa and our neighbouring countries.

I call upon the Cross-Border Road Transport Agency to intensify monitoring and enforcement along key corridors to ensure full compliance with permit conditions, regulatory requirements and overloading of freight and passengers. We will also prioritise vehicle roadworthiness and fatigue management, and clamp down decisively on illegal operations and non-compliance.

As we deploy our traffic officers, road safety educators and communicators, we are also aware that some road users will try to thwart our policing efforts by re-routing their travel onto secondary roads.

Through round-the-clock monitoring of traffic trends we will be able to monitor such diversions. Our plans are agile and will follow traffic patterns and allow for surprise patrols at times and routes nobody expects us to cover.

Our call to the nation is to use the roads responsibly and respect each other. I urge those who will be undertaking long distance journeys to stagger your travel times to avoid peak congestion and to stop every two hours to combat fatigue. To the pedestrians: Be visible, and do not cross major highways while under the influence.

One of the cornerstones of our intensified road safety campaign during the seventh administration has been our engagement and synergy with non-governmental organisations and civil society.

We will continue to intensify community-based awareness campaigns and use places of worship and fellowship to encourage congregants to act responsibly on the roads, particularly in high-risk areas focusing on pedestrian safety and the dangers of drunk driving and distracted driving. This grassroots reach is essential in influencing behavioural change where it matters most.

Mobilisation of all forces throughout the country from small local traffic departments, Metropolitan Police, Provincial Traffic Police and the SAPS will be coordinated through the National Road Safety Steering Committee structures, ensuring coordinated planning and reporting, not only limited to the Easter period, but throughout the 365 days of our programme.

This structure is supported by a provincial-based coordinating structure called the Provincial Road Safety Forum chaired by the MECs responsible for traffic and transport matters in the different provinces. The structure is constituted of Executive Mayors and heads of traffic and transport in the different local traffic departments to ensure seamless coordination of information to all role players.

As we are preparing to observe Human Rights Day tomorrow, I wish to reiterate that the government regards road safety as a human rights issue. It is about the right to life and freedom of movement. This is why South Africa wants to achieve the UN target of halving road deaths by 2030.

I wish to thank our MECs, officials and dedicated traffic officers and emergency services who will be on 24-hour duty away from their own families. Your patriotism is the shield that protects our people.

I also take this opportunity to wish South Africans of different faiths well over the coming observances!

Let us work together to ensure that 2026 is our safest year on the roads yet. It begins with you. It begins with me.

I thank you.