**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**TOURISM COMMITTEE CALLS FOR ARRESTS FOR THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR COORDINATED BUS ATTACKS**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 20 September 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Tourism received a briefing from the South African Police Services (SAPS) on the ongoing attacks on inter-provincial long-distance bus operators. SAPS informed the committee that incidents targeting bus operating companies, Intercape in particular, include extortion, attempted murder, stoning and other assault and intimidation of bus drivers, and obstructing roads.

These attacks pose a danger to bus drivers and their passengers, but they also tarnish South Africa’s image as a tourism destination and create the impression that tourist visitors are unsafe here. Interventions implemented by SAPS will reassure tourists that they are safe when travelling around the country.

The committee had met previously with the Department of Transport and representatives from Intercape to discuss allegations of racketeering in the sector and what appear to be coordinated attacks directed at bus operators.

SAPS reported that other long-distance bus operators have been subjected to acts of violence at the hands of minibus taxi operators. SAPS further said the Eastern and Western Cape provinces have experienced a high number of incidents in the past 12 months directed at busses belonging to Intercape, Trans Lux and Greyhound.

Intercape has 69 cases pending relating to attacks on their buses. The Eastern and Western Cape provinces registered 61 and eight cases respectively. The committee was concerned that no arrests in connection with the Intercape cases were made in the Eastern Cape.

SAPS reiterated the need for Intercape to deploy a representative to the Provincial Joint Operations and Intelligence Structure in order to ensure that information is available on routes, frequency of trips and number of busses in transit at any given point. This will assist the SAPS to deploy resources on a daily basis to assist in curbing these incidents.

The committee further urged SAPS and the National Joint Operations and Intelligence Structure to ensure that when buses cross into other provinces they are protected. The committee questioned the effectiveness of SAPS’ surveillance work, as there is has been an increase in incidents without arrests.

The committee nonetheless commended SAPS for its protection of the bus industry, but also called for similar efforts around taxi violence in the country. The committee also called for the Eastern and Western Cape MECs to become more involved in addressing the issue of violence directed towards long-distance bus travel.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, MS TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA**

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