**National Assembly**

**Question No: 722**

**Mr K P Sithole (IFP) to ask the Minister of Transport:**

Whether, in light of the recent spate of violence and killings seen in the taxi industry, his department has disbursed the COVID-19 Taxi Relief Fund in a manner that was specifically engineered to prevent any issues of conflict, given the violent history of the taxi industry; if not, why not; if so, what are the full, relevant details?

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**REPLY**

The transport sector, across the world, experienced massive ridership drop due to the pandemic brought about by the Coronavirus (Covid-19). This followed stringent measures imposed by many countries to mitigate and curb the spread of the virus. Some of these measures included restrictions in the movement of people through lockdowns as well as encouragement for people to work from home.

In South Africa, the taxi industry bore the brunt of these measures. Initially, taxis were permitted to carry only 50% of their licensed vehicle capacity and this was later increased to 70% when the lockdown restrictions were eased. The industry also had to contend with increased cost of procuring cleaning disinfectant materials for vehicles and sanitisers for passengers. The net effect of all these to the industry has been a declining revenue base and an increase in costs, which left many operators struggling to stay financially afloat.

In response, the Department secured once off *ex gratia* relief funds to the value of R1,135 billion to assist operators to mitigate the effect of Covid-19. The relief scheme is not intended to compensate for loss of income and was provided in terms of the Disaster Management Act.

The Taxi Relief Fund was approved as relief to operators from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.