



TRANSPORT MINISTRY  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF  
TRANSPORT, MR FIKILE MBALULA, ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM HELD ON 13  
SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 09H00**

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Tourism,  
Honourable Thandi Mahambehlala

Members of the Portfolio Committee

Acting Director-General, Mr Ngwako Makaepa

Tourism is an important sector that makes a meaningful contribution to our economy and the brand South Africa. Each one of us has a role to play to ensure that the economy thrives and tourism grows exponentially. The attacks on long-distance buses and the intimidation and extortion that accompanies these attacks cannot be characterised as anything else but blatant criminality. Those who believe they have the right to kill and maim in order to get ahead and eliminate competition belong in jail.

We are under no illusion that while transport is primarily an economic and a social function, it also carries massive security responsibilities. Those who rely on public transport whether to access centres of economic activity, social infrastructure and amenities or tourism and recreation, have a right to safety while using the system. We therefore have a collective responsibility, working with law enforcement authorities to eradicate this cancer in our midst.

The intermodal conflict that has worsened in recent years is widespread and goes beyond long-distance bus operators. Reported incidents include scholar transport, cross-border transport, commuter services and commercial contract between employers and private operators.

Extortion has become institutionalised in the public transport space, with the taxi industry being the main culprit. This provides a perverse incentive for conflict and violence. These practices are not isolated to Western and Eastern Cape but widespread across all Provinces.

We are committed to working with law enforcement authorities to deal these criminal acts a decisive blow.

At the conclusion of the National Taxi Lekgotla we hosted in October 2020, the taxi industry made a clear and unambiguous statement on violence and conflict. The industry declared that violence, in all its manifestations has no place in the industry. We all have a responsibility to take decisive action to eliminate this cancer that casts a shadow not only in the public transport sector, but the country at large.

Our enabling legislation that regulates public transport operations provides for a number of punitive measures for those who wilfully undermine the letter and spirit of the law in pursuit of narrow selfish ends.

A tightly co-ordinated mechanism with law enforcement authorities and intelligence will deliver tangible outcomes that arrest the proliferation of this criminality.

Ours is to invoke legal instruments at our disposal to ensure that they have nowhere to hide.

Employing legal instruments at our disposal enable us to tighten the conditions of all operating licences in the country to empower regulatory entities to invoke the provisions of section 79(2) of the National Land Transport Act (NLTA). This provision empowers regulatory entities to withdraw or suspend operating licence under defined circumstances.

Section 91 further empowers the Minister and MECs at Provincial level to invoke emergency measures, which include closing of ranks and routes and impounding of vehicles where there is an outbreak of violence. These actions can be co-ordinated among different Provinces. However, these measures are only effective if the identity of the perpetrators of the violence is known.

We are therefore considering the following measures to reinforce law enforcement interventions that will stem this violence.

- Declaring a nation-wide moratorium on the issuing of all operating licences. A countrywide approach is important to undermine the inter-Provincial nature of the extortion and racketeering activities, that fuel violence and killings.
- Implementing urgent measures to build requisite capacity for municipalities to ensure operating licences are issued on the basis of up-to-date Integrated Transport Plans as required by law.
- Putting in place enforceable by-laws to regulate ranking facilities. This intervention will require co-ordination at Provincial level to ensure uniformity that can be enforced by law enforcement authorities.

In addition, serious attention is being given to amending conditions of all operating licences to explicitly provide for the suspension and withdrawal of operating licences in terms of section 79(2)(b) where an operator is found to have been party to extortion and racketeering activities.

We are equally considering publishing regulations empowering the National Public Transport Regulator to establish a complaints line and monitoring mechanism for extortion and racketeering activities, which evidence will be shared with law enforcement authorities. This should include evidence of collusion by members of the SAPS and/or traffic officers as provided for in the NLTA Amendment Bill that is yet to be signed into law.

These interventions are our contribution to the broader package of interventions that will be implemented through the Inter-Ministerial Committee led by Minister Cele.

The Acting Director-General will make a detailed presentation to the Committee.

I thank you.