



## **MINISTER OF TRANSPORT'S STATEMENT ON LAWLESSNESS IN THE TAXI INDUSTRY**

The Minister of Transport, Ms. Dipuo Peters, is making a clarion call for extensive behavioural transformation and attitude adjustment in the taxi industry, especially by drivers, which has become notorious for violence, anarchy and bad service.

It is a truism to acknowledge that the taxi industry is one of the most important modes of transport in the South African integrated transport dispensation, providing employment to approximately 400,000 people and moving 68% of commuters to various destinations.

While the majority of the taxi industry adhere to laws and regulations, it is quite disconcerting to concede that the clout and enormity of the taxi industry are damagingly undermined by the lawlessness and impunity with which some taxi operators and drivers intimidate commuters and other road users, brazenly violate traffic laws, and exhibit violent behaviour.

The South African Bill of Rights guarantees the right to life, human dignity and freedom from harm but the manner in which taxi operators and drivers continue to pack commuters into rickety unroadworthy vehicles, refuse to practice and accentuate the importance of buckling up, and bully innocent motorists, is averse to the civil liberties afforded to our great country by our constitution.

Indeed, it is unacceptable and very unfortunate that taxi operators and drivers are taking their own clients –and other road users- for granted and ignore their fundamental right to life by driving recklessly and by using taxis without permits. It seems that in this very important industry, commuters are seen merely as a means to an end (making quick money), and other motorists are seen as impediments to that end.

As important as the taxi industry is to the transport sector, we cannot sit back and allow conduct that goes against the very core values and doctrines of our forebears - Ubuntu and the Freedom Charter - to remain unpunished.

The Department of Transport will continue to support the industry and it is working on an integrated commuter subsidy system.

The Minister calls upon the traffic law enforcement agencies to enforce the law and deal harshly with transgressors.

The Minister also calls on the Provincial Governments to tighten the licensing regime by punishing transgressors and awarding good behavior on the part of compliant operators and drivers. We need commuters and other road users to be ready to partake in programmes like "the Taxi Driver of the Year" competition, amongst others, which we will introduce soon.

The Taxi Industry is too important for the public transport services of the Republic of South to allow rogue elements to destroy it. The Minister calls on the leadership of the industry to, with immediate effect, implement their skills training programmes to enhance good road use behavior and respect for commuters and other road users.

The Ministry and Department are ready, through the Transport Education and Training Authority, to support and enhance their industry-driven efforts.

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