

MEDIA STATEMENT

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To: All Media

Attn: News Editors / Transport Reporters

MEC Mamabolo appeals to communities to refrain from traffic disruption, destruction of infrastructure during the protests

MEC Jacob Mamabolo has called on communities to refrain from resorting to violence and destruction of roads infrastructure when embarking on protest actions.

MEC also raised concerns about the negative impact of traffic disruptions, roads blockades, destruction of roads infrastructure and the inconvenience caused to road users and motorists.

"We urge communities to raise issues affecting them in a peaceful manner and not to resort to destruction of public property and blockading of roads," said Mamabolo.

This came out of the discussions MEC held on Friday, 07 May 2021 with community leaders from Nellmapius Extension 22 in Mamelodi, the Mamelodi Amalgamated Taxi Association, representatives from the City of Tshwane and Department of Human Settlements to provide feedback on the electrification of the Nellmapius Extension 22 RDP houses.

"Affected communities must find ways to reach out to responsible structures such as councillors, who should handle and deal with these important matters. The provincial government also has various platforms and structures, including the Ntiriso Outreach Programs where communities can voice their concerns about service delivery issues," Mamabolo appealed.

The intervention by the MEC comes after residents had blockaded Solomon Mahlangu Drive and shut down its construction revamp demanding electricity.

This led to clashes with taxi operators who were demanding that the road be reopened as the blockade was affecting their operations. MEC Mamabolo intervened to stop further clashes.

MEC also appealed to the taxi industry not to resort to violence when faced with community protests.

"Whilst we understand the concerns of the taxi industry that traffic disruptions, destruction and blockading of roads affect their daily cash flow and revenue, especially in the light of revenue lost during Covid19 hard lockdown, there is no justification to physically confront protesters," MEC said.

MEC raised this concern after it was alleged that some taxi operators opened fire at protesting community members.

"We are deeply concerned about tensions between communities and the taxi industry playing themselves out on the roads, with the community protesting for services and taxi operators trying to recover from the negative financial impact brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic," Mamabolo remarked.

The MEC added he "got a commitment from residents that they would not block the road again, refrain from damaging infrastructure and would instead approach the relevant authorities to resolve their issues through peaceful engagements".

Ends!

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