



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**STATEMENT DELIVERY BY MINISTER OF
TRANSPORT, MR FIKILE MBALULA ON THE
OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE EASTER ROAD
SAFETY CAMPAIGN ON THE N12 HIGHWAY IN
EKURHULENI ON 12 APRIL 2022**

Programme Director

Deputy Minister, Ms Sindisiwe Chikunga

Gauteng MEC for Transport, Mr Jacob Mamabolo

Mpumalanga MEC for Public Works, Roads and
Transport, Ms Mohita Latchminarain

Chairperson of the RTMC, Mr Zola Majavu

Chief Executive Officer of the RTMC, Adv Makhosini
Msibi

Ladies and Gentlemen

Over the next few days, our national roads will, once again carry millions of motorists, one of the greatest movement of people over a single long weekend, as people will be travelling to different destination for the Easter holidays.

Many of these travellers will be worshippers making their way to various places of pilgrimage. The desire to travel is high among this group, considering the COVID-19 restrictions on travel and religious gatherings over the last 2 years, which have since been relaxed with the lifting of the state of disaster.

Others will be crossing our land borders to neighbouring states to spend time with families and loved ones. Some will be crossing Provincial boundaries to visit families and taking a much-needed break from work and institutions of learning in the Cities.

We know from previous travel patterns we know that the busiest routes this time of the year are the the N1 from Gauteng to Limpopo, the N3 from Gauteng to KwaZulu Natal, the N2 from the Western Cape to Eastern Cape, the N14 to from Gauteng to the North-West and the N12 from Gauteng to Mpumalanga, the route on which we are hosting this event on today.

This busy period requires of us to skillfully deploy resources across the country if we are to succeed in arresting the carnage on our roads. The realisation of the 25% reduction on road fatalities must be driven by innovative solutions that not only effect behavioural change by road users, but also maximises compliance with the law.

We will therefore be deploying law enforcement officers, through a collaborative mechanism that has proven effective over the years, drawn from the South African Police Service, the National Traffic Police, provincial traffic officers and municipal traffic officers. The safety of the pedestrians, motorists, and other vulnerable road users is paramount.

Our focus will be on the use of safety belts, the roadworthiness of vehicles, fatigue, drunk driving, pedestrian safety and dangerous driving which includes speeding, recklessness and overtaking on barrier lines.

We are cognisant that this is going to be one of the most challenging Easter weekends as we expected increased volumes of traffic due to the lifting of the state of disaster. Our analysis of monthly road fatality statistics since 2019 for the months of January and February, indicate that road deaths are on an upward trajectory this year.

In January and February this year, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three (1,823) people lost their lives on our roads. This is higher with compared to one thousand five hundred and twenty-one (1,521) fatalities in the same period in 2021. However, travel was limited in the 2021 period due to COVID-19 restrictions and thus cannot provide realistic comparison.

However, a year-on-year comparison for January and February 2019 and the same period in 2020, provides a better insight. This comparison therefore confirms that the 2022 figures remain high, when compared to the same period before Covid-19 restrictions were imposed.

In the year 2020, the country experienced one thousand six hundred and fifty-five (1,655) fatalities compared to one thousand seven hundred and forty-four (1,744) in 2019.

Over the last 5 years, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Limpopo account for the highest numbers of fatalities compared to other Provinces.

All provinces experienced a spike in fatalities in the first two months of the year with Gauteng leading with three hundred and fifty-five (355) fatalities, followed by KwaZulu Natal with two hundred and sixty-nine (269), Western Cape with two hundred and forty-nine (249), Limpopo with two hundred and thirty-nine (239) and Eastern Cape, two hundred and thirty-two (232).

The North-West Province recorded one hundred and seventy (170) fatalities, while Mpumalanga recorded one hundred and fifty-eight (158), Free State had ninety-six (96) and Northern Cape had sixty-six (66) fatalities.

The leading causes of fatal crashes in the two months period, were accidents with pedestrians, followed by single vehicle overturning, hit and run and head on collisions. Drunk driving is suspected to be an underlying factor in the hit and run incidents and overturning of single vehicles.

When we released the January statistics in February this year, we made a commitment to intensify law enforcement operations focused on drunk driving. We specifically pronounced our zero tolerance for phuzza Thursdays. Since then, we have conducted one hundred and forty-seven (147) phuzza weekend operations, resulting in four hundred and eighty three (483) arrests. This campaign will be strengthened over the coming Easter long weekend, right through to the May day long weekend ending on May 2.

We had earlier made an undertaking to release road fatality statistics monthly. However, this does not allow researchers sufficient time to do a proper analysis to make the data meaningful and inform resource allocation.

We have therefore decided to release these statistics quarterly.

The inclement weather conditions and the flooding in areas like KZN has made us to reprioritise our planning and the deployment of our law enforcement to mitigate further carnages on our roads. It is common cause that during the rainy season we experience most accidents caused by speeding and also the inappropriate control of vehicles in such conditions.

Our deployment model during this easter is buttressed by the activation of the 24/7 in the two additional Provinces and we urge all the would-be travellers to stagger their travelling commencing from tomorrow until Friday. We further urge them to travel during daytime when visibility is much improved and their agility is always at its best. There will be a number of road blocks. This is necessitated to ensure that our roads are not overflowed and all our law enforcement agencies, disaster management team and health team are on high alert.

We remain resolute in our efforts to arrest the carnage on our roads in a sustainable way. These fatalities not only cause pain and suffering to victims and their families, but they place an enormous burden on the economy and the health system.

We call on all law enforcement agencies to work together to strengthen our national enforcement plan which seeks:

- To reduce crashes, fatalities and injuries by increasing visible and effective policing in hazardous locations
- To increase detection and visibility of pedestrians through reflective clothing and other apparel
- Prosecution of critical offences
- Harmonisation of common operations of traffic enforcement
- To restore confidence in road traffic management fraternity

I am pleased with the strides that the Provinces of Gauteng and Mpumalanga have taken to introduce a 24/7 shift system for traffic officers in their respective Provinces. This will assist in improving visibility of traffic officers on the roads at all hours of the day.

We continue to urge those whose driving licence cards expired between 26 March 2020 and 31 August 2021 to renew their licence. The end of the state of disaster means we can no longer issue Directions that extend further the grace period. The final opportunity is provided by the current Regulations which extends the grace period by 30 days from date of the end of the state of disaster. This means affected motorists have until 5 May 2022 to renew their expired driving licence cards.

In conclusion, arresting carnage on our roads starts with you and me doing our part in eliminating reckless conduct that places the lives of others at risk.

It is possible to reduce road fatalities in our country if we adopt the highest levels of discipline and courtesy towards other road users.

All road users must appreciate that roads are shared spaces. When we use the roads, we must embrace the age-old dictum that says: I am my brother's keeper and I am my sister's keeper.

Let us use the 2021 Easter period to re-ignite the ethos of ubuntu, compassion and empathy to end the carnage on our roads.

Together we can do more to save life and limb on our roads. As each motorist takes to the road to travel for whatever purpose, each one must play their part in ensuring that all those who share the road space Arrive Alive.

I thank you.