



**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT MS DIPUO PETERS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE FESTIVE SEASON MEDIA BRIEFING AT
THE PROTEA HOTEL, MIDRAND, JOHANNESBURG**

20 December 2016

RTMC Chairman Mr Zola Majavu

Members of RTMC Board and other Boards present

Deputy Director General Mr Chris Hlabisa

RTMC CEO advocate Makhosini Msibi

Heads of Traffic

Officials from the Department of Transport and the RTMC

Members of the media

Ladies and gentlemen,

Amilcar Cabral said: “Hide nothing from the masses of our people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories.”

Even if we are confronted by the most daunting challenges, the future seeming to be too bleak and have lost all hope we remain resolute in our endeavour to fight the scourge of road carnages.

This festive season is very unique and ultra-different characterised by three successive long weekends coupled with, festivities, pilgrimages, and travel to various destination for a variety of reasons.

This current festive season brings unprecedented and daunting challenges in the form of excitement, spree drinking, inclement weather, impatience and lawlessness on the roads.

It is noble to recognise and thank those that have been law-abiding road users who made it to their destinations without any incident. This they achieved by simply adhering to the rules of the road; driving within the set speed limit, buckling up, avoiding the use of cell phones while driving, using roadworthy vehicles, remaining calm irrespective of challenges confronting them on the roads, taking regular stops to avoid fatigue and avoiding the use of alcohol while driving.

On the other hand, we take exception and condemn in the strongest possible terms those who remain irresponsible and reckless on our roads. They continue to use our roads with disdain and with little regard to other law abiding road users. This uncaring attitude by these irresponsible and reckless road users led to the loss of innocent lives on our roads.

Their reckless behaviour has cost this country dearly. It has left orphans, widowers and widows, many elderly fathers and mothers have been left without hope as the sole breadwinners have perished through the selfish and irresponsible conduct of others. Most of the next of kin are exposed to pain, agony and untold misery that they will not be able to recover due to unrepentant, deliberate and recalcitrant attitude of drivers who are bent on maiming law-abiding road users.

We are witnessing an unprecedented pattern during this festive season which largely contributes to the unacceptably high levels of crashes and fatalities with human factors contributing **82%**, roads and environmental factors **10%** and vehicle factors contributing **8%**.

Road and Environment factors (10%)

It is necessary and unavoidable that we amplify the matter of the road and environmental factors which accounts for 37.8% being wet and slippery roads and 16.2% being poor visibility, 10.8% being stray or wild animal and 8.1% being very poor lighting.

Vehicle factors (8%)

The vehicle roadworthiness factors which accounts for 8% comprises of 40% being tyre burst prior to a crash, 26.7% being faulty brakes, 6.7% faulty steering and other 6.7% being headlights not switched on and another 10% being bicycles without rear reflectors.

Human factors (82%)

A very worrying human behavioural pattern that continues unabated is the tendency to ignore the call for road safety by road users.

Surprisingly pedestrian jaywalking accounts for **30.7%**, speed account for **15.2%**, hit and run accounting for **10.2%** and overtaking facing oncoming vehicles **7.6%**.

We claim no easy victories and we will tell no lies in confronting the scourge of road carnages underpinned by lawlessness and recalcitrant attitude of some of our road users. We have to do everything in our might

to deal with the male stubborn and chauvinistic attitude as they account for **78.4%** of fatalities and **89.4%** being Black.

We have equally noticed a very disturbing trend relating to female road user behaviour. Females accounts for **21.1%** of the total percentage of our fatalities. We have to deal decisively with this phenomenon and investigate the causal factors of this unfortunate trend.

We are at pains to accept the harsh realities of those who have prematurely succumbed to road fatalities and their lives cut short by some rogue elements in our communities who have no regard for human life. It cannot and it should not be that **39.2%** of the total fatalities is **passengers** who place their trust in the hands of drivers and yet never reached their destinations.

Pedestrians account for **34.3%** of the total number of **fatalities** and surely their lives were cut short by motorists who are always not vigilant and caring. Some of the pedestrian who perished contributed by their own negligence as they were found to be jaywalking while under the influence of alcohol. Pedestrians have a responsibility to use the roads safely and not to drink and walk even in the middle of the night without visible clothes.

Drivers largely contributes **23.8%** of the road fatalities. Some of those drivers were innocent and responsible road users and were made to lose their lives prematurely by those who flagrantly flouted the rules of the road.

Some of the deceased drivers were the major cause of these avoidable road crashes as they deliberately overtook on barrier lines, blind spots,

travelled at high speed, were under the influence of liquor while some were fatigued and never cared just to stop for a moment.

There are 684 fatal crashes recorded since the 1st to 19th December 2016. Nationally, there is an increase of 16% in comparison to the previous year same period.

The following provinces have recorded an increase on absolute crashes figures:

Kwa-Zulu Natal – 32

Limpopo – 28

Mpumalanga -26

North-West – 9

Gauteng – 3

Free State - 2

The **Northern Cape** has recorded a decrease of four (**4**) in absolute crash figures, with **Eastern Cape** and the **Western Cape** stabilising at the same figure of **82** (Eastern Cape) and **54** Western Cape, as compared to the same period last year.

Unapologetically and steadfastly, I have deemed it necessary to urgently convene a meeting with all Traffic Chiefs and Regional Directors of Provinces with high fatalities to engage and robustly confront the prevailing situation with a view of finding solutions and interventions to reduce these carnages and fatalities.

Some of the gaps that have been identified is the weakness in monitoring and enforcing the implementation of the **24/7 law enforcement**

operations. We have also identified an emerging and disturbing trend where our law enforcers are not hard enough on un-roadworthy vehicles, by not discontinuing and impounding such vehicles.

The inclement weather, in particular rainy days and wet surfaces, seem to have exacerbated our plight and accounted for a sizeable number of road fatalities and crashes.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are 845 fatalities recorded since the 1st to 19th December 2016, with an increase of 17% in comparison to the previous year same period.

The following provinces have recorded an increase on absolute fatalities figures:

Limpopo – 63

Mpumalanga – 44

Kwa-Zulu Natal – 31

Free State – 17

North West - 6

The following provinces has recorded a decrease in absolute figures:

Eastern Cape – 31

Western Cape – 2

Northern Cape – 2

Gauteng – 4

These four (4) provinces have stuck to the letter and spirit of our strategy. Their good work cannot go unnoticed. We want to acknowledge and

appreciate particularly the **Eastern Cape** for the sterling work they have done in reducing the number of fatalities.

We also commend the Gauteng province on the arrest of 2509 drunken drivers who are the main causes of crashes.

I will further engage with my counterpart in all provinces to consider extending overtime payment for remainder of the festive season as well as to ensure that our Law Enforcement Officers are provided with appropriate tools of trade such as vehicles.

This mid festive season preliminary fatality rates figures is meant to review our performance, take corrective measures and intensify our visibility, strengthen operations as well as road safety awareness campaigns in our endeavour to reduce crashes, fatalities and injuries in line with our commitment to implement the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety.

As the Department of Transport, we continue our engagements with the Department of Justice to introduce minimum sentences for negligent and reckless driving. We are seeking to reclassify drunken driving from a Schedule 3, which is less severe to a more severe Schedule 5 offence to ensure those who negligently cause crashes on the roads do not get bail easily and spend time behind bars.

Our vitally important journey towards achieving uncompromised and dependable safety on our roads is shared and we all need to play our role by behaving and demonstrating responsible, patriotic and compassionate behaviour as citizens.

We call upon the media, and Faith-Based Organisations, NGOs, CBOs, the youth and all strata of society to partner with government in ensuring that collectively we mobilise, educate, pray and plead with our communities to take care of their own lives. One death is one death too many.

Abram Lincoln said: *“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today”*.

And former President Thabo Mbeki taught us that:

“Gloom and despondency have never defeated adversity.

Trying times need courage and resilience.

Our strength as a people is not tested during the best of times.”

These are real trying times. We need everyone to accept that roads are shared spaces and that road safety is everyone’s responsibility.

I thank you.