



**TRANSPORT MINISTRY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SPEAKING NOTES FOR THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,
FIKILE MBALULA, DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE
RELEASE OF THE 2020 PRELIMINARY FESTIVE SEASON
STATISTICS ON 22 DECEMBER 2020 AT PETROPOORT AT
09h00**

Deputy Minister, Mme Dikeledi Magadzi

Director-General, Mr Alec Moemi

Chairperson of the RTMC Board, Adv Zola Majavu

Members of the Board of the RTMC

CEO of the RTMC, Adv Makhosini Msibi

Provincial Heads of Department

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

As we come to the end of what has been arguably a difficult year, we must continue to reflect on our efforts and refine our strategies to arrest the carnage on South Africa's roads. Our task has been made that much harder by the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to ravage our country and the world.

Our law enforcement officers are not only expected to enforce the law without mercy, but must also ensure that the Level 1 regulations and directions are strictly adhered to.

The preliminary figures we are releasing today are a dipstick on the progress we are making towards achieving our 20% target to reduce fatalities this festive season.

Over the last few weeks we have traversed the country, interacting with road users and holiday makers. We undertook high profile activations in various Provinces, at shopping malls and taverns to raise the public consciousness about road safety as part our intensified Arrive Alive 365-days, 24/7 campaign.

Road safety is a collective responsibility. Government, civil society and road users must all play their part to preserve human life on the road. Targets are meaningless if we do not bring to bear our collective effort to make our roads safer.

The peak travel period is upon us, and we expect traffic volumes to spike between today and Thursday, followed by another spike on 31 December. The final peak is expected on the 3rd and the 10th of January 2021, as many people will be making their way back to major cities, ahead of the re-opening of industries and schools.

Our statistics demonstrate that our roads were fairly busy during the first peak, between 18 and 19 December, despite the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over this period, an average of 2 439 vehicles per hour were recorded on the N1 from Gauteng to Limpopo.

The N3 from Johannesburg to Durban recorded an average of 1 547 vehicles per hour. This was marginally lower than the same period in 2019.

Since the start of the festive season, our traffic law enforcement authorities kept a close eye on vehicle movements and transgressions of the rules. A total of 416 roadblocks were conducted from 1 to 20 December, with 634 166 vehicles having been stopped and checked.

A total of 109 529 motorists were issued with traffic fines for various offences. On the other hand, a total of 2 415 vehicles were discontinued, while another 1 801 vehicles were impounded.

A total of 2 111 motorists were arrested for various offenses. 896 were arrested for drunken driving, 336 for speeding and 588 warrants of arrests for outstanding traffic fines were served.

The highest speed was recorded on the N1 near Ventersburg in the Free State, where a motorist was caught traveling at 242 kilometres an hour.

These preliminary statistics demonstrate that the vast majority of motorists are law abiding citizens, who obey the rules of the road. Yet, there are those who pay scant regard to the rules and place the lives of others at risk through irresponsible, reckless and negligent behaviour. These are the people who do not deserve our mercy. These are criminals we must throw a book at.

Saving life and limb on the road starts with each one of us. Speaking up and calling out our friends and relatives, when they conduct themselves in an irresponsible manner on the road is the start of an effective behavioural change.

It is regrettable that 690 people lost their lives on our roads over the period 1 to 20 December 2020, compared to 732 over the same period in 2019. While this represents a 5.7% decline year on year, it is no reason to celebrate. One life lost on our roads, is one life too many. Equally, the total number of crashes has declined by 8% compared to the same period last year.

These fatalities that could have been avoided, amplify the pain of those whose loved ones have succumbed to COVID-19 while other relatives perish on our roads.

The clarion call made by President Cyril Ramaphosa to all of us, to adhere to the Disaster Management regulations and directions in order to preserve human life, must also inspire us to adopt a similar attitude to the rules of the road.

Until every citizen internalises and accepts that preservation of human life is sacrosanct, and supersedes all else, we will continue to cheapen human life through our reckless conduct on the roads.

Let us all be our brother's and our sister's keepers and be the embodiment of the human right values that are the cornerstone of our nation.

It is noteworthy that 6 Provinces recorded a decline in fatalities. We are encouraged that these reductions make a positive contribution towards the realisation of our 20% target of reducing fatalities on our roads in 2020.

- Northern Cape recorded a decline of 23.5%, with 13 fatalities compared to 17 in 2019.

- Western Cape recorded a decline of 26.6%, with 69 fatalities compared to 94 in 2019.
- Free State recorded a decline of 28.8%, with 47 fatalities compared to 66 in 2019.
- Gauteng recorded an 18.7% decline, with 122 fatalities compared to 150 in 2019.
- North-West recorded a 5.8% decline, with 49 fatalities compared to 52 in 2019.
- KwaZulu-Natal recorded a 3% decline, with 131 fatalities compared to 135 in 2019.

3 Provinces recorded an increase in the number of fatalities compared to the same period last year.

- Eastern Cape recorded a 21.5% increase, with 96 fatalities compared to 79 in 2019.
- Limpopo recorded an 18.4% increase, with 90 fatalities compared to 76 in 2019.
- Mpumalanga recorded a 15.9% increase, with 73 fatalities compared to 63 in 2019.

I wish to convey my heartfelt condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of all those who have perished on our roads. Similarly, I wish a speedy recovery to all those who have been injured on the roads.

While it is encouraging to see a decline in fatalities to date, we are still a long way from achieving the 20% target we have set for ourselves this year. I urge all road users to exercise extreme caution as we enter the second phase of our peak travel period.

All our traffic law enforcement officers must remain vigilant and intensify efforts to stop the carnage on our roads. Our tactics will include visibility in residential areas and in the proximity of places where festivities occur, in order to deter those who would otherwise be emboldened to drive under the influence of alcohol.

In the coming days we will intensify our focus on hotspots and will continue to ensure that those who should not be on the road, are not on the road. We will equally intensify the enforcement of Alert Level 1 regulations and directions without fear or favour. This includes enforcing the curfew for all road users.

We have seen videos in circulation, of revellers gathering and partying alongside our roads with scant regard for COVID-19 regulations or health protocols. We were equally appalled by video clips of disgraceful behaviour by young people, in what is referred to as a Dinho convoy along the R80 Mabopane Highway into the Daspoort tunnel; who were partying, drinking and blocking the road in large numbers.

These dastardly acts invariably end in tragedy as was the case with the Mabopane incident.

This conduct is unacceptable, and our law enforcement authorities will show no mercy towards people who turn our roads into party spots and disregard either the rules of the road or the COVID-19 regulations.

Allow me to express my appreciation and gratitude to all the road safety ambassadors, law enforcement officers, emergency medical personnel, private sector companies and non-governmental organisations, that have partnered with us on this journey towards arresting the carnage on South Africa's roads. Your resilience, commitment and selflessness are values every South African must emulate in elevating the value of human life above all else, and showcasing Ubuntu in action.

I wish all of you a safe Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Let us all endeavour to live beyond Desember and Arrive Alive 365 days 24/7 Waya Waya.

I thank you.