

KWAZULU-NATAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES SWIFT INTERVENTION TO PHONGOLO GRIEVING FAMILIES

KwaZulu-Natal Acting Premier, Ms Nomagugu Simelane has announced several interventions to assist the grieving families who lost their loved ones in the uPhongolo horrific accident last Friday.

Simelane also received confirmation that 20 lives perished, 18 of which are children aged between Seven and 12, an Educator and the driver of the bakkies that was transporting the children from school, which collided head-on with a truck on N2 Highway.

Addressing the families at Godlwayo Thusong Centre after visiting the accident scene, affected schools and families in their homes, Simelane alongside KZN Transport, Community Safety and Liaison MEC Siphso Hlomuka and KZN Education Acting MEC Bongi Sithole-Moloi, Simelane said the Provincial Government will support the families from funeral arrangements, counselling of family members and pupil in affected schools and ensure that justice is done.

The driver of the truck believed to be the cause of the accident appeared in uPhongolo Magistrate Court and was remanded in custody pending his bail application on Monday 26 September 2022.

“Upon inspecting the accident scene and receiving a technical briefing on what might have been the cause of accident, we are convince that its tantamount to murder and the driver should charged as such. We need to teach others a lesson through him. Families will never ever be able to see their children and he too must languish in jail. We will leave that to the courts but its should not be a culpable homicide,” Simelane said.

“As the Government of KwaZulu-Natal we will engage with families from now on until they burry their loved ones. We have brought with us all relevant government entities including the Road Accident Fund which will assist family members with claims but we will intervene as Government and assist in the funeral arrangements. Our teams will be here to talk to families and see whether they are willing to do a mass funeral. Of course this will be in agreement with all families because we are cognisant of their cultural and religious beliefs,” Simelane said.

Simelane said the government will soon be meeting with South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) to discuss the issue of expanding the N2 Phongolo strip. “Extending the road would be a long project that can take years. Immediate interventions would be to erect speed humps, increase law enforcement working with Provincial Road Traffic Inspectorate and local traffic officers. MEC Hlomuka will be meeting with Minister Fikile Mbalula this week and we will put this issue on the Agenda. We

cannot sit and relax while the trucks are terrorising communities and other road users in uPhongolo. We will also be meeting with truck companies for them to deal with their drivers who are bullying other roads users,” Simelane vows.

In a separate accident, one person sustained serious injuries when two trucks and four light vehicles collided on the R66/ R34 between uLundi and Vryheid. Upon impact for vehicle’s caught fire which forced the road to be closed for hours.

ENDS!

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