

TO ALL NEWS EDITORS

Media Release

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**MEC NKONYENI APPLAUDS THE SWIFT ARREST OF TEN SUSPECTS INVOLVED IN VEHICLE LICENSE FRAUD AND CORRUPTION IN DURBAN**

The newly appointed MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Ms Peggy Nkonyeni, has welcomed the arrest of ten suspects who are alleged to be involved in an elaborate syndicate of issuing fraudulent vehicle roadworthy certificates in the province.

Today, a multi-disciplinary team comprising various law enforcement agencies pounced on suspects in Pinetown after months of investigations which uncovered widespread fraud and corruption activities. A team comprising of the Department of Transport's Road Traffic Inspectorate (RTI), South African Police Services (SAPS) and the Hawks has been investigating the syndicate for months.

The seven suspects were caught at their business premises in Pinetown this morning and law enforcement agencies are hot on the trail of three other suspects. Among the suspects arrested today includes the centre owner, examiners and administration clerks. They were then taken to the Pinetown Police Station for processing.

As part of stepping-up efforts in fighting fraud and corruption, the closure of this vehicle centre marks an increase of six centres that have been shut down because of such nefarious activities.

Since June 2020, it is alleged that the centre has fraudulently issued 305 certificates to heavy motor vehicles and 171 to motorbikes. It is alleged that vehicle owners would send pictures via Whatsapp and Road Safety Certificates would be issued without the vehicles being take for the inspection. As such there is no evidence of brakes reports and no suspension inspection of vehicles and other examination reports.

MEC Nkonyeni said today's breakthrough is welcomed, especially because heavy motor vehicles are always at the centre of the high number of accidents in the province.

“As government we are vehemently opposed to any form of corruption and those found to be involved in fraudulent and corrupt activities must be dealt with harshly. Today’s breakthrough will send a strong message to everyone, including officials working at all our centres that issuing of fraudulent documents undermines our efforts of building a safer road environment. Uncovering such acts of criminality will ensure that vehicles on our roads are roadworthy, and in turn save the lives of many innocent people. Government is serious about curbing the scourge of road crashes and fatalities and this time around we want to be more proactive in uncovering such illegal activities through our internal investigations,” said MEC Nkonyeni.

MEC Nkonyeni further called on the Department to embark on a full-scale investigation of all the existing centres in the province to assess compliance and other mitigating mechanisms to curb fraud and corruption.

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