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Settlement with taxi drivers

THE POLICE ARRESTED THE DRIVERS INSTEAD OF THE DRUG DEALERS

ELLEKIA DIRE AND ELFAS TORERA

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X taxi drivers arrested during disturbances that shook Rustenburg's public transport sector yesterday were eased after police reached a settlement with the taxi associations. The six were arrested on Monday after being found in possession of rya-ber but were not charged.

According to the Boitekong and Mer-rog Taxi Association public relations officer, Lesiba Kakana, the drivers had at one of the drug addicts to buy rya-ber with the intention of making a community arrest of those selling rya-ber. "When the police arrived after being called they arrested the drivers instead and the drug seller managed to get away. This led to the incident getting out of control. The drivers accused a police officer of letting the drug peddler go," Kakana said.

Provincial police spokesperson Sig Sabata Mokgwabone said that police were called to intervene after taxi drivers were seen assaulting some young men at the taxi rank. "Information at our disposal says young boys were being assaulted for alleged theft of a car radio.

"During the intervention, police vehicles were damaged and after some taxi drivers were restrained from what they were doing, their peers decided not to transport commuters," he said.

Hundreds of commuters were left stranded as the drivers protested, demanding the six drivers be released if they claimed they had done nothing wrong. The drivers started blockading roads leading in and out of the taxi rank and the bus rank while beating up anyone they suspected of using drugs. Shops in and around the taxi rank

had to be shut as stones were thrown at the police and two of the police vehicles were damaged.

Commuters were seen walking from the ranks to find alternative ways to get to their destinations.

Lebogang Mokwena of Sunrise Park said he had to walk to his home but welcomed the move by the drivers to fight illegal drugs.

"As a community we report the drug sellers to the police but there is no action from them and this has led to gangsters who have been terrorising our communities for a while," Mokwena said.

Another commuter, Ledwaba Ramogama of Rustenburg North, accused authorities of being in the pockets of foreign nationals alleged to be behind illegal drugs.

"Nigerians, for instance, will even tell you that you can report them to the police but they won't be arrested. They've got police and prosecutors in their pockets - the dockets will go nowhere if they're arrested. They handle cases with attitude, not merit," Ramogama said.

The situation was calm and police, armed with rifles, could be seen monitoring the situation around the taxi ranks.

However, there were sporadic attacks on those perceived to be drug users around the city.

Rustenburg municipality spokesperson, Andrew Seome, urged the community not to take the law into their own hands.

"The incident when taxi drivers violently confronted alleged drug users escalated into mob justice. This will not be tolerated by law enforcers," he said.

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ALERT: Police officers maintained a huge presence in Rustenburg's inner city to monitor the situation after Monday's running battles

MUM CHARGED WITH MURDER!

By REGINALD KANYANE

A WOMAN charged with attempted murder and concealment of birth appeared briefly at Lehurutshe Magistrates Court on Monday.

Refilwe Maota (26), from Dinokana Village near Zeerust, North West allegedly threw her newborn baby boy down a pit toilet.

North West police spokesman, Brigadier Sabata Mokgwabone, said: "It appears the woman, whom the family did not know was pregnant, delivered a baby boy without assistance on Thursday."

"The baby was discovered by the woman's cousin after seeing a trail of blood on the floor of the toilet.

She heard the baby crying from the

pit toilet and called her sister and the neighbours.

The suspect's aunt, Lydia Maota said: "We were not aware she was pregnant. We only found out on Thursday when her cousin called us," she said.

The suspect was granted R1 000 bail and the case was postponed until 12 February for further investigation.

The baby was taken to a place of safety.

Packet Seaketso, the provincial secretary of the South African National Civic Organisation, said: "We urge government to intensify its programmes for pregnant women. We believe people like Refilwe must go through counselling."

He said Refilwe should have given the child up for adoption.

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Two in court for robbery, kidnap
The Citizen FOS Nca

Three men allegedly robbed and kidnapped a 20-year-old woman in Kgabalatsane near Brits, North West police said yesterday.

Police spokesperson Lieutenant-Colonel Adele Myburgh said the woman was asleep in her house, when the men gained entry and threatened her with a firearm and knife.

"They allegedly took cash, a cellphone and tablet. She was kidnapped and dropped off unharmed at a graveyard in Hebron."

Two men were later arrested.

The suspects will appear in court today. -ANA

Taximen hunt for violent drug gang

By ZANELE SITHOLE

THE town came to a standstill on Monday as taxi drivers deserted their taxis to go in search of drug addicts.

The R510 between Rustenburg and Boitekong in the North West was barricaded with stones and cars were refused entry into town.

On Saturday, addicts in Boitekong allegedly assaulted a driver from the Boitekong and Meriting Taxi Association in the early hours of the morning.

The driver, who is still in hospital, was allegedly attacked by a drug gang known as the SVK.

The association's spokesman, Lesiba Kekana, said a driver belonging to the asso-



Taximen from the Boitekong and Meriting Taxi Association abandoned their taxis on Monday to search for a drug gang they suspect murdered a driver.

ciation was robbed and killed last month.

"Our drivers are sure it was the drug group because we know their actions. They rob people in the morning.

"This is their second attack on our drivers. We'll be burying the first man this weekend in Zeerust."

He said they didn't find

any suspects and have asked their drivers to leave the matter to the police.

North West police spokesman, Brigadier Sabata Mokgwabone, said no arrests have been made.

"Two people were taken in for questioning but were later released. However, investigations continue."

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