

'COPS PROTECT DRUG DEALERS'

Tensions run high after alleged attack

By DULILE SOWAGA

THE WAR between residents and alleged drug dealers continued this week.

The situation in Rustenburg, North West remained tense after allegations of drug dealers arriving at the weekend and attacking locals at a tavern.

Seventeen suspected drug dealers were bust.

Last week, six residents were bust for damaging property and the murder of a suspected Nigerian drug dealer.

On Monday, residents gathered at the Rustenburg Magistrates Court, where CPF chairman Israel Maimane appeared.

But the NPA refused to put his case on the roll and ordered police to investigate properly.

People said cops bust their leaders to intimidate them and protect drug dealers. They said when cops came to bust Mai-



Supporters of CPF chairman Israel Maimane (top) lift him up after he was set free by the court.
Photo by Dulile Sowaga

mane, he was to have been charged with malicious damage to property for burning a vehicle but they changed the charge to murder without explanation.

Community leaders and councillors were allegedly put on a wanted list after they met near the police station on Saturday and residents tried to shut down the cop shop.

Maimane said cops refused to

go with them to suspected drug dealers' houses. "I called home owners to tell them to evict tenants involved in drugs. As a man from one of the houses died, the police linked me to his death."

Brigadier Sabata Mokgwabone said five cases of robbery, assault and aggravated robbery were opened on Sunday.

He was not able to comment on the allegations.

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TAXI DRIVERS SHUT DOWN CITY!

By ZANELE SITHOLE

NORTH West's platinum city ground to a halt on Tuesday as the war between taxi drivers and foreigners raged.

Taxi rank entrances in Rustenburg were closed, with no traffic moving in or out.

The trouble started when cops seized a taxi allegedly linked to a crime that happened on Sunday.

In a meeting between taxi drivers, owners and a negotiation forum, the drivers asked for the taxi to be released and the driver not to be arrested.

They accused cops of neglecting issues they raised yet attend-

ing to foreigners' complaints. They said they felt unsafe since the trouble started over the weekend.

They repeated their demand that suspected brothels be raided. A driver said he felt unsafe because they had been attacked by foreigners.

"They're out for blood. They have targeted us as taxi drivers and we must protect ourselves," he said.

"We are raiding the brothels to protect our residents."

Forum chairman Herman Sebego spoke to the angry drivers and said the taxi will only be re-

turned if the owner or driver reports to the Rustenburg cop shop.

"I understand drivers are angry but the taxi cannot be released without the driver or owner making a statement," he said.

He said a police task team will be formed to work with drivers. "Houses suspected of belonging to drug gangs will be raided with the help of the team."

Sebego encouraged operators to report crime to the police.

Captain Elisabe Augoustidis said police were attending to the situation.

She promised to respond to Daily Sun's questions at a later stage.



Police try to keep the peace at the Rustenburg Taxi Rank.
Photo by Rapula Mancai

'Punish violent motorists'

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Minister says court should give harsh sentence to drivers after two assaulted traffic officer who stopped them

ELFAS TORERAI

THE courts should set an example by giving a hefty sentence to two motorists who appeared in the Potchefstroom Magistrate's Court for the assault of a traffic cop, says Transport Minister Joe Maswanganyi.

Sabata Kortman, 32, and his sister Niswaki Kortman, 26, were arrested after they allegedly assaulted Johannes Manthi, a traffic cop when he stopped them on the N12 between Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp on December 12 last year.

Kortman is said to have also threatened to cut off Manthi's manhood.

Maswanganyi, together with community safety and transport management MEC Dr Mpho Motlhabane attended court proceedings on Tuesday.

They said that it was a very serious incident and believed that the judiciary should send a message to the entire country through this case to ensure that such perpetrators know that there is justice in the country.

"No one is allowed to disobey the law and all of us are subject to the Constitution, therefore we are making a plea to the judiciary to send a message and remind these criminals that there is a justice system in the country," he said.

"We are leaving this case to the hands of the judiciary that the law must take its



ASSAULTED: Transport Minister Joe Maswanganyi, right, and MEC Mpho Motlhabane with two traffic officers.

course and harsh sentences should be given to the perpetrator. He has crossed the line and something must be done," the minister said.

He expressed concern that incidents of traffic police abuse are on the rise as some people take advantage that officers are not able to defend themselves. Addressing about 200 traffic cops after the court session, Maswanganyi said: "You must defend yourselves, we

are not running a church here and we are enforcing the law. Criminals these days are armed. They will kill you because their conscience has died. They value money more than life.

"We cannot have a situation where criminals are doing as they please on our roads nor allow motorists to kill our law enforcers. These perpetrators must be brought to book," he said.

The minister used the opportunity to send his gratitude to traffic officers for their hard work and dedication during the festive season.

"You have worked very hard this season working 24/7 and that brought the country to achieving an 11% decrease in fatalities.

"You did not enjoy your festive season as you left your families to respond to the call of duty by saving the lives of our people on the roads.

"Continue doing your work knowing that you have support from us whatever you are doing is the best for the country," he said.

The case of the two motorists was postponed to February 20.

The two are out on R5000 and R2000 bail respectively.

Sabata is seen on a recorded video manhandling Manthi during the incident.

Manthi said he had given Sabata a fine for overtaking on a barrier line. "I was on duty with two of my female colleagues 12km outside Potchefstroom when the incident happened.

"I stopped the motorist who was driving a Toyota Yaris after he overtook another vehicle on the barrier line. I gave him a fine for breaking the law. However, all hell broke loose when he requested a physical address from me.

Kortman gave me a postal address instead, but I explained to him that I needed a physical address. He failed to cooperate and hurled insults at me. He demanded his drivers licence back but I refused. Kortman manhandled and assaulted me in the process," Manthi said.

The 47-year-old policeman lives with a disability after surviving a horrific car accident in 2013.

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RAF welcomes 11% decline in festive season road fatalities

KUTULLO MADISHA

THE Road Accident Fund (RAF) has welcomed the 11% decrease in festive season road fatalities between December 1, and January 15.

Minister of Transport, Joe Maswanganyi announced the reduction in the road fatalities this week.

RAF acting CEO Lindelwa Jabavu said the fund aimed at easing the financial and emotional burden of accident victims, but was under severe pressure with an unacceptably high rate of claims amounting to more than R33bn a year.

"The claims expenditure, coupled with liabilities of more than R188bn, represent large sums of money which our country could rather target towards

valuable services and infrastructure.

"The department of transport's proposed Road Accident Benefit Scheme Bill, which is presently going through the legislative process, is meant to address this difference and will ensure thousands now excluded from the claims process get the necessary benefits," Jabavu said.

Meanwhile the Automobile Association (AA) while welcoming the decline in fatalities has expressed concern at the increase in the number of youths who died and the continued high number of pedestrians who are killed on South Africa's roads.

"These numbers are promising and hopefully signal the start of a new

trend where our country's road fatality statistics show decreases instead of increases," the AA said.

"Much more needs to be done to ensure our road deaths are reduced even further, and this year's improved figures indicate some progress toward achieving that."

Despite these better statistics, the AA said it was concerned about the increase in pedestrian deaths and the number of deaths of people aged between 25 and 34 years.

"We agree with the minister that more needs to be done to educate the youth about pedestrian safety.

"We will continue our Walk Safe cam-



FATALITIES DOWN: Transport Minister Joe Maswanganyi.

paign in primary schools, as well as our visibility campaign to promote bet-

ter pedestrian visibility, as part of our contribution to dealing more effectively with these problems," the company said.

Apart from the national figure, an important statistic was the 43% decline in fatalities on E3 of the country's most hazardous routes, which the AA believes is partly due to increased visible policing on these routes.

The association called for this policy to be extended to other areas.

"It is therefore critical that the introduction of the 24/7 shift system for traffic law enforcers is done sooner rather than later.

"With more traffic officials on our roads at all times of the day or night,

we believe these reduced numbers will be sustained and even improved on next year," the association said.

The AA also welcomed the reduction in the number of people stopped for drunk driving, not wearing seat belts, or for reckless and negligent driving.

"This again points to a change of attitude in behaviour among motorists which we view as the most important element of road safety.

"Bad driving behaviour needs to become more socially unacceptable and the evidence presented by the minister indicated this is also beginning to happen."

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