

# MEC tackles illegal taxi operations and hiking spots head-on

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**C**ommunity Safety and Transport Management MEC, Dr Mpho Motshabane accompanied by law enforcement officers, woke up in the early hours of Friday last week to tackle head-on the problem of illegal hiking spots and illegal taxi operations on the N12 Wolmaransstad, R504 Ottosdal, R503 Lichtenburg and N18 Mahikeng roads.

The operation entered its third phase since it was launched in Mahikeng last year, followed by a Huhudi one last month. The purpose of these operations is to ensure that those providing transport services abide by the laws of the country for that industry.

Operators of public transport are all expected to have made necessary applications, registered their vehicles accordingly, received relevant permits and operating legally and lawfully. This is a non-negotiable process.

Commuters using public transport have been urged to refrain from hitch hiking and using pirate vehicles. They were also

encouraged to avoid hiking at illegal hiking spots and warned about the danger of using illegal taxis and hiking.

During the operations 26 taxis and four other cars were impounded, one person was arrested for drunken driving and another one for using a fraudulent permit to operate scholar transport. A fine was also issued to the driver for operating without a valid permit.

MEC Motshabane used the opportunity to visit taxi ranks and engaged the leadership of different taxi associations. Members of the associations' leadership raised concerns and complaints that include illegal public taxi operations, illegal hiking spots, illegal permits, drivers operating without licenses and potential conflicts as well as simmering tensions in the industry.

The MEC said he was pleased by the outcome of the operation. "Hiking spots are a sore sight, a source of tensions and a cause for concern. Members of the public need to cooperate and work together with taxi operators in order to minimise conflict and save lives. It's only safe to use official taxi ranks and legal taxi operators, not pirate taxis," he said.

Motshabane said these kind of opera-



A traffic officer checking one of the taxis during the illegal taxi operation checkpoint

tions would continue in all districts of the province.

"From here we are going to the last District of Bojanala. We will not hesitate to enforce the law. We will close down all illegal taxi ranks and we will be tough on

pirating," he said.

The Jaws unit, the police, taxi associations and officials of the department started the day's operation at dawn in Wolmaransstad and ended at dusk in Montshiwa Stad in Mahikeng.