

MEDIA STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 30 JULY 2026

**MEC VIOLET MATHYE CONDEMNS THE USE OF BAKKIES TO TRANSPORT LEARNERS
AFTER FATAL CRASH IN VHEMBE CLAIMS THE LIFE OF A 15-YEAR-OLD**

The Limpopo MEC for Transport and Community Safety, Ms. Violet Mathye, has expressed profound grief following a road crash in Dididi Village, Vhembe District, which occurred today, 30 July 2026 at 12H00, and which has claimed the life of a 15-year-old male learner.

According to a preliminary report received by the Department, a Toyota Hilux Light Delivery Vehicle that was transporting learners lost control and overturned.

In the crash, one learner tragically lost his life. Twelve others, including the driver, sustained critical injuries and remain under medical care. A further thirteen learners sustained slight injuries and were treated.

MEC Mathye has condemned in the strongest possible terms the continued use of Light Delivery Vehicles, commonly known as bakkies, to transport learners to and from school.

"A bakkie is a goods vehicle. It is not designed to carry passengers, and it is certainly not designed to carry children. Every time we allow a learner to climb into the back of a bakkie, we are gambling with that child's life. Today that gamble cost us a 15-year-old son, brother, and learner. It is unacceptable and it must stop with immediate effect," said MEC Mathye.

The Department reiterates that in terms of the National Road Traffic Act, 1996 and the National Land Transport Act, 2009, learners must only be transported in approved scholar transport vehicles. These include registered buses and midibuses that operate with a valid operating licence, are certified roadworthy, have proper seating, and are driven by drivers who hold a valid Professional Driving Permit.

The Department, together with the Department of Education, SAPS, and Municipal Traffic Authorities, will with immediate effect intensify operations targeting illegal scholar transport. Vehicles found to be transporting learners in contravention of the law will be impounded and operators will face prosecution.

"We call on parents, School Governing Bodies and communities in Vhembe and across Limpopo to refuse to put children in bakkies. We understand the challenges of access and affordability, but no saving is worth a child's life. Government is working to expand access to safe, subsidised and contracted scholar transport, and we urge communities to work with us," MEC Mathye added.

The MEC has conveyed her sincere condolences to the family, friends and school community of the deceased learner, and wishes all the injured learners a speedy and full recovery.

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