

**PRESS RELEASE**

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Attention : News Editors/Transport Reporters/PR Wires

Female only traffic officer teams to take the street

Gauteng: Female law-enforcement officers under the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) are set to take over the streets of South Africa this month in an effort to reduce road crashes and raise awareness about road safety.

Officers have planned a number of high impact law enforcement operations in which all female teams will be deployed at notorious high accident routes as part of celebrating Women's Month.

Operating under the theme "Refihlile" - We have Arrived - female officers have undertaken to show no mercy for lawlessness on the roads this month and beyond. "No offence will be too big or small for us! We are equal to the task," said National Traffic Police (NTP) chief Ntsiki Jolingana.

The operations will be conducted by the National Traffic Police (NTP) in collaboration with the South African Police Services, provincial traffic departments, Metro traffic police, home affairs and other stakeholders.

Statistics indicate that at least forty people die daily in South African due to road crashes. The high number of crashes can be attributed to various crimes and road traffic offences

such as excessive speed, unsafe overtaking, driving under the influence of alcohol and unsafe crossing on the roads by pedestrians.

Un-roadworthy public passenger vehicles such as minibuses, busses and light delivery vans that are used to ferry learners to and from schools are a major concern. This has warranted the women of the NTP to try a different strategy to reduce road carnages.

Mrs Jolingana promised that focussed attention will be placed on child safety by insisting that younger children are placed in child restraints while older ones must be using seat belts.

"The death of innocent children due to the negligence of their parents, who themselves are fastening seatbelts, is not acceptable," she said. "The fine we may issue for not restraining your child is nothing compared to the life of that child. So be a responsible parent, protect your child."

Last year in August, the NTP-led female officers stopped and checked more than 9000 vehicles and arrested 23 people for various offences including possession of dagga, driving without valid documentation and speeding. They discontinued 60 un-roadworthy vehicles and issued 150 summons.

The operations will also seek to highlight the challenges that female law-enforcement officers continue to face at home, at the workplace as well as in society. Mrs Jolingana said societal culture that is unaccepting of women in law-enforcement was one of the biggest obstacles that females continued to face today.

"There are organizational and personal challenges that woman face in law-enforcement" said Mrs Jolingana.

"Organizational issues ranges from lack of diversity in the work place, equipment and uniforms that are improperly sized and lack of policies and guidelines addressing women issues. The personal challenges are unsupportive families and, balancing work and family pressures. The road users also pose a challenge to female officers by continuing to display abusive behaviour," she said

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