



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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**MINISTER DE LILLE ENGAGES INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES ON TOURISM
SAFETY INITIATIVES IN BRIEFING TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS**

Note to editors: The following address on Tourism Safety Initiatives in South Africa was delivered by the Minister of Tourism, Patricia de Lille to members of the Diplomatic Corps in Pretoria today. Read more below...

Ambassador Salih Omar Abdu, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present here today
Officials from the various Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates
Officials from the Department of Tourism and the Department of International Relations & Cooperation (Dirco)
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

Firstly, let me thank you all for taking the time to be here this morning.

I wanted to take the opportunity to brief the Diplomatic Corps on progress we have made in the establishment of the National Tourism Safety Forum, so that you are in a position to communicate these developments to your citizens.

On 29 May 2023, we held the inaugural National Safety Forum meeting in Sandton, Johannesburg.

The National Safety forum comprises all three spheres of government, the South African Police Service, National Prosecuting Authority, Airports Company South Africa, the Tourism Business Council and various private sector bodies as well as tourism product owners.

In the first meeting, the agenda was clear: what are the problems and how can we fix them.

We developed a clear action plan for all to adhere to.

On 29 August 2023, we held the second quarterly meeting in Cape Town to report back on the implementation of the action plan.

Let me, now, brief you on those matters.

NATIONAL TOURISM SAFETY STRATEGY

Working through the established National Tourism Safety Forum, the Department of Tourism facilitated the process for the development of the National Tourism Safety Strategy.

The main aim of the strategy is to foster a public-private sector partnership in addressing issues of tourism safety in a more coordinated manner. The measures aim to provide an enhanced visitor experience and in the long-term, change perceptions of South Africa as an unsafe destination.

The National Tourism Safety Strategy is centered upon three (3) key themes which include: (i) Proactive measures, (ii) Responsive measures, and (iii) Aftercare Programmes.

Proactive Measures: This pillar focuses on addressing issues that can minimize the potential of incidences that adversely impact tourist safety. It is about putting in place mechanisms to ensure that tourists, both domestic and international, feel safe even before arriving at the destination.

Some of the initiatives within this pillar/ theme include:

- Implementation of the Tourism Monitors Programme (TMP)
- Database of crime against tourists.
- Facilitation of cases relating to international tourists.
- Facilitate the establishment of the Victim Support Programmes (VSP).
- Integrated Tourism Safety Awareness sessions.

Responsive Measures: The second pillar focuses on measures or processes that will be followed once an incident has occurred. These mechanisms seek to ensure quick and effective turnaround time to attend to tourists in distress should an incident of crime occur. This is about stakeholder coordination and communication in terms of messaging and protocols to follow.

We have, since, set up a committee led by the private sector under Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA), to develop clear Crisis Management Communications Plan and Protocols.

This will ensure that there are clear protocols in place during an incident and that the messaging is same.

The TBCSA is currently working on that plan.

Aftercare Measures: The third theme focuses on measures or processes that will be put in place once an incident has occurred. Key to this theme is the establishment of the “*Victim Support Programme*” in all the provinces.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICES

The Department of Tourism has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the South African Police Services (SAPS) on collaboration towards the prevention, investigation and combating of crimes impacting on the tourism industry and the safety and well-being of tourists.

The MoU entails working on a number of identified areas including:

- Identification and analysis of tourism hotspots;
- Establishment of a database of crimes committed against tourists; and
- Participation in tourist safety awareness and educational programmes.

The MoU Action Plan is being implemented through the Tourism Safety Technical Committee comprising of the Department of Tourism and SAPS.

The MoU is currently undergoing revision to ensure that other initiatives being implemented with private sector on safety and security are considered and strengthened.

TOURISM SAFETY ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan incorporates both initiatives identified by the Department and by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and to be handled at a bilateral level.

Tourism Monitors Programme (TMP)

The Tourism Monitors Programme (TMP) is part of the broader government intervention that involves training, mentorship and deployment of unemployed youth in identified tourism attractions and sites. Government has invested R174 Million for the deployment of Tourism Monitors in this financial year.

The key objectives of the programme include: enhancing tourism safety awareness at key tourism attractions and sites, upskilling of unemployed youth and reducing tourist vulnerabilities.

The Tourism Monitors are to be placed in key attractions and sites with high volume of tourists and also posing a high potential risk to tourists.

59 tourism hotspots have been identified to ensure that the tourism monitors are placed in prioritised identified tourism attractions and sites.

The Department is finalising plans to implement the next phase of the programme by 15 December 2023.

The Department will deploy 2 300 Tourism Monitors nationally, in entities managed by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) Gardens, iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Ezemvelo Nature Reserve, in the national parks managed by the South African National Parks (SANParks), and at airports managed by Airports Company South Africa (ACSA).

The Department is working with the private sector organisations and SAPS to ensure that the programme is enhanced.

The key performance areas of the appointed Tourism Monitors include but not limited to:

- Patrolling within the identified attractions and sites/ areas.
- Raise tourism awareness and provide information to tourists
- Report any crime incidents to SAPS and other relevant enforcement agencies.
- Assist in tourists with victim support (tourist in distress).
- Provide basic tourism information about attractions and the country.

The focus of the training for Tourism Monitors will be on an accredited General Security Practices NQF 3: (National Certificate on Safety and Security).

The SAPS has also developed a Learning and Development programme through its Human Resource Development unit. This is a non-accredited programme that will be an add-on to the proposed accredited Safety and Security training that will be offered to the Tourism Monitors.

The Learning Programme will cover among others the following modules:

- Crowd Management (Manage large crowds during local/ international events at deployed sites);
- Legal Framework (Mandate; Human Rights; CPA and Specific relevant crimes);
- Reporting (Duties of first responder; gathering information; basic interviewing skills; incident reporting and statement making);
- Crime Prevention (Crime prevention concepts (e.g.) Security, Risk, Vulnerability; Crime displacement; Guarding; Patrols and Access control; and
- Personal Skills (Physical fitness; Situational awareness and Tactical Survival Techniques; Use of identified tools of trade. Accordingly, the tools of trade will be utilised for self-defense and not any form of intervention by the Tourism Monitors.

C-MORE Tracking Device

As part of enhancing the Tourism Monitors programme, the department has been working with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and has developed an innovative shared awareness and integration platform called C-MORE Tracking device.

This system uses modern web and mobile technology.

As part of Tourism Monitors Programme implementation, the Department will pilot the C-MORE system to ensure that the Tourism Monitors are safe while executing their duties of ensuring the safety of the tourists.

The National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS)

The NATJOINTS is a security structure that handles issues of national importance.

Various government departments are represented in the NATJOINTS and there are sub-committees within the structure that deal with various matters.

The Department is now participating in the Stability Priority Committee on Crimes, and this is where issues related to crimes against tourists will be discussed and further investigated so as to assist the sector with data and measures to minimise such risks.

Database of crimes against tourists.

The South African Police Services is developing a coding system that will assist in capturing real-time data on information related to tourist attacks.

The system involves the enhancement of Crime Administration System (CAS) and Investigation Case Docket Management System (ICDM).

The system will capture the full profile of the tourists when registering a case.

The information can also be harvested to form part of the Database on crimes against tourists in South Africa and will assist in understand trends and in turn proactively putting measures to counter such incidences.

Facilitation of cases relating to international tourists.

There have been concerning cases involving international tourists.

In most instances, once an incident has taken place, the victims refrain from laying charges and, given their limited time in the country, they prefer to leave the country.

Another stumbling block is the time it takes to conclude investigations and bring the case to court.

Most victims are unable to come back to the country to be witnesses or even to be a part of the case.

Recently the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DJ&CD) amended section 158 of the Criminal Procedures Act (Act No.51 of 1977).

It now says the court may order that evidence be presented via audio visual link, subject to the provisions of Section 153. *(Section 153 refers to child witnesses, mentally disabled witnesses or witnesses who will give evidence of a sexual act).*

The Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Act 12 of 2021: Section 51C states that, with consent, a Court may order that a witness gives evidence by means of audiovisual link.

Those who have left the country before the conclusion of a case, could connect through audio-visual link at the RSA Missions in their countries of origin.

The President has since accented to the legislation and its now in operation as of 05 August 2022.

Victim Support Programme (VSP)

The victim support programme entails the aftercare support given to tourist in distress.

Once tourists have been victims of crime, in most instances they lose most of their valuables.

The sector has put together programmes that will ensure that tourists in distress are supported post the trauma.

This programme entails collaboration between private and public sector, also working with the various embassies to ensure that the affected tourists are given the necessary support while in distress.

The department has developed the draft Standard Operating Procedures manual that will guide provinces in establishing their own victim support programme.

Two provinces, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape, have outstanding aftercare services. We are now in the process of ensuring all the remaining provinces follow suit.

Safety Applications (Apps)

The Department of Tourism has developed tourist safety tips that can be accessed via a QR-code.

The information available allows tourists to scan the tips and access them electronically.

The safety tips have also been incorporated into the MY-SAPS App for easy access.

Once a user downloads the MY-SAPS app, the icon will appear on the devices home screen with all the relevant information.

The private sector has also launched the SECURA Traveller App in July 2023, which is solely dedicated to tourists' safety nationally.

On 31 August 2023, we also launched a 24-hour operations center for the SECURA App where agents man the screens day and night to pick up on any incidences.

The App is linked to major private security companies and it can be downloaded with a minimal monthly subscription fee.

The user will be able to access various services, including emergency service providers.

The SECURA App is available from the app store on mobile devices, users can then download the app and fill in their details and be linked to all services available on the app.

It should be noted that all the Tourism Monitors will also be granted access to the App for their safety and to ensure the safety of tourists.

The use of Drones

The Department of Tourism has engaged the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on the use of drones in the management of incidences of crime against tourists.

Various options were shared with the department, and the department is also engaging SAPS who have been using this technology.

The department is looking at piloting the use of drones in the coming financial year.

Just yesterday, I signed a partnership agreement with Google.

This will include the revision of the Google Maps app. In at least two recent cases of crime against tourists, they were diverted into unsafe areas after selecting the shortest route on the app.

While crime is an issue in South Africa, this is the reality for many countries across the world.

The reality is that 99% of our visitors return to their countries unscathed, having had a remarkable time in our beautiful country.

There is so much we offer as a nation, from our friendly people to our outstanding culinary offerings and breathtaking sights, attractions and activities.

Again, let me assure you that South Africa is open for business and leisure. We are ready to welcome tourists from all over the world in order to grow our economy and stimulate job creation in this important sector.

We are working hard to improve our tourism offerings and enhance safety measures so that all who explore South Africa, whether domestic or international tourists, can do so safely.

I implore you to inform your citizens of the measures we as government and the private sector have in place to ensure their safety and let us continue working together to grow inclusive tourism in South Africa.

I thank you.

Ends/

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