

## Minister Nhleko unveils a Memorial Stone in Bawa

Public Works Minister Nkosinathi Nhleko, MP, has unveiled a memorial stone in remembrance of 10 people who drowned when the vehicle in which they were travelling was swept away by heavy floods in Mnquma municipality in the Eastern Cape. The van, which was the mode of transport used at the time of the accident, was crossing the Bawa Bridge during heavy rains when it was swept away.

As per tradition in the area, most victims were buried next to the bridge where they lost their lives. Their remains have since been exhumed and re-buried in different villages. The memorial, was erected by the Department of Public Works at the original burial site – as a sign of respect and in keeping with the tradition.

The bridges have since been built, in a partnership between the Department of Public Works, Department of Defence and Military Veterans, and the Eastern Cape Department of Roads and Public Works. The bridges were built using the Bailey bridge technology. This system is a truss bridge which is manually assembled by connecting panels end to end and is highly labour-intensive and versatile.

In his address to the community, Minister Nhleko said it was black and rural communities who still faced challenges like flooding and poor infrastructure. He made a promise that government will continue to uplift and bring development to such communities.

Also present at the memorial unveiling ceremony was the Eastern Cape MEC of the Department of Roads and Public Works, Thandiswa Marawu and the Mnquma Municipality Mayor councillor Thobeka Bikitsha.