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with thousands of commuters resorting to alternative transport arrangements.

This is not the first time widespread taxi strikes hit the City.

A similar strike made headlines in March this year, also over the regular impoundment of taxis, as well as arrests of drivers.

The City of Cape Town said in a media release on Monday that once again, stay-away action by the minibus-taxi industry is being marked by violence, intimidation, thuggery, and attacks on other public transport services, leaving thousands of commuters stranded and deprived of earning an income.

"Given the volatile situation, the City has suspended the N2 Express service in Khayelitsha,

with MyCiTi service deviations in place for Dunoon and surrounds, as well as Hout Bay. Similarly, the Dial-a-Ride service for people with special needs has also been suspended in Dunoon, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Bloekombos, Delft and Nyanga until further notice.

"The suspension of services and route deviations are in the interest of the safety of passengers and staff," the City said.

BUS ROUTES

The MyCiTi bus routes serving Dunoon and surrounding areas were deviated due to intimidation and threats. These are routes T01; T04 and D08.

"No injuries have been reported to the City as yet, still, many commuters and personnel have been traumatised by these events. Also, the destruction of public

and private property is totally unacceptable and cannot be condoned, regardless of any grievances the minibus-taxi industry may have."

BLUE DOT TAXI PROJECT

The transport and public works department partnered with the City, other local government authorities and members of the minibus taxi industry to improve public transport in the province through the Blue Dot taxi service programme, which started last May.

The provincial government has since decided to terminate it as a R42 million shortfall hangs over its head.

The programme, with 800 minibus taxis participating, was rolled out across the province including Cape Town, Mossel Bay, Plettenberg Bay and George in May 2021.

Each participating vehicle was branded and fitted with a tracker to allow the authorities to monitor them on the roads.

Chair of Santaco, Mandla Hermanus, says in a media statement that the organisation was informed of the decision to scrap the programme by the provincial government on 30 November.

DEMANDS

Santaco is demanding the following:

- a review of the by-laws under which taxis are impounded;
 - funding for the expansion of the Blue Dot (taxi incentive programme);
 - commitment by the provincial government to support formalisation efforts by the taxi industry.
- "We urge commuters to make alternative transport

arrangements. We apologise for the inconvenience this action may cause," Santaco said on Monday.

The City says they note the demands from Santaco, who is representing the minibus-taxi operators in the Western Cape, and they fully agree that formalising the industry is key to its long-term sustainability.

"The City is of the view that the National Department of Transport should take the lead in devising a strategy for formalising and modernising the minibus-taxi industry; and secondly, that the national department should provide the funding for these efforts where they are implemented – be it on local or provincial level.

"The City is doing all it can – given its mandate and financial resources – to support the minibus industry."