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Author: Mbekezeli Mbuli

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The accident scene

Mbekezeli Mbuli

MBOMBELA - Just two days after the province had laid six learners to rest in Mafube Village who had died when their school bus had collided with a goods train in the area, yet another freak accident involving a school bus transporting learners occurred in KaMagugu on Monday.

According Lowvelder Express's sister publication, Lowvelder, at least three people were certified dead on the scene, while 27 more sustained injuries varying from slight to serious, and were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment following a collision involving a midibus, a bakkie and an articulated truck on the D2296 between Karino and Mbombela.

The deceased are the driver and passenger of the bakkie and one learner who was an occupant in the midibus.

The injured included the driver of the midibus and 26 learners.

Failing to hold her emotions back, the visibly angry Mpumalanga MEC for education, Cathy Dlamini, lashed out at irresponsible drivers who transport learners, calling for tough actions against anyone found on the wrong side of the law.



The scene of the accident. > Photos: Tumelo Waga Diakwane

"We currently don't know what happened here, but as government we are calling for stricter actions against anyone who is at fault, because we are tired of burying our children due to irresponsible drivers. Heads

must roll. We are just coming from burying six learners in Mafube Village, and there are reports of learners hit by a vehicle in KaBokweni and now this. No, this is too much and we can't remain quiet," said Dlamini shortly after the accident.

During the memorial service of the six learners in Mafube, the emotional Dlamini told mourners she could imagine the children just before they were hit by the train.

"Every time I close my eyes, I hear their screams and it breaks me, because I am a parent too. It's painful ... really painful," she said.



The MEC for public works, roads and transport, Thulasizwe Thomo, chats with education MEC Cathy Dlamini during the memorial service of six learners who were killed in an accident in Mafube Village.

> Photo: Mbekezeli Mbuli

Dlamini's counterpart, the MEC for community safety, security and liaison, Jackie Macie, also sent his heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased and wished those who were in hospital a speedy recovery.

He said he too was concerned about the number of accidents involving school learners lately, citing that this serves as an indication that there is a problem that needs to be dealt with urgently.

"We cannot continue losing innocent young lives on our roads due to recklessness. This must just come to an end," Macie said.

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The accident scene.