



**Road Traffic**  
Management Corporation

*Ensuring safe, secure and responsible use of roads in South Africa.*

# **THE ROLE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT IN PREVENTING ROAD CRASHES**

## **THE INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY INJURY PREVENTION INDABA 1-2 AUGUST 2024**

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# INTRODUCTION



- ❑ The Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) as a lead agency in traffic management matters in the RSA has been formally requested to participate in the International Road Safety Indaba dated 1-2 August 2024 in the Kingdom of Eswatini.
- ❑ The 2-day indaba is scheduled to convene leading experts, policy makers and stakeholders from around the SADC region to address the critical issues of injuries and fatalities.

# PURPOSE

1

To present the role of law enforcement in preventing road crashes for deliberations with an objective to identify, narrow the existing limitations and challenges gaps to turn the situation around

2

To foster a multidisciplinary approach to road safety incorporating health, transport, law enforcement from a safe system perspectives

3

To share best practices and innovation in road crash prevention, emergency medical care and post crash response

4

To strengthen collaboration between government agencies, NGO's and private sector to improve road safety outcomes through research

# DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS



- ❑ **A road crash** “involves a collision of a moving vehicle on a public road in which a road user (human or animal), is injured; while road fatality refers to a road death as when a person injured dies within a period of 30 days” (Jacobs et al, 2000; 6).
- ❑ Carter et al (2017) referred to **road safety** as a system aimed at minimizing the frequency of crashes and the resulting deaths and injuries by implementing all available tools, knowledge, and technology. This definition is an abridged form of the one by Wegman (2017).
- ❑ A **road safety system** is a safe system paradigm with the following components:
  - ❑ Coordination and management, Ensuring adequate funding and capacity, Road safety data creation, integration and publication for monitoring and evaluation, use of technology for intervention purposes, **Prevention measures to mitigate human inadvertent errors during driving a vehicle**, Safety management decisions – decisions aligned with broader transport and planning decisions that meet wider economic, human, and environmental goals ( South African National Road Safety Strategy 2016-2030 & UNDA 2030)



## DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS CONTINUED .....



- ❑ **Lawlessness** refers to actions not permitted by law or not obeying the law.
- ❑ **Normlessness** refers to weakening of socially approved norms or a sense that social norms have broken down or are no longer effective.
- ❑ **Police deployment** refers to the assignment of human and resources to a particular location to attain a specific objective.
- ❑ **Intelligence policing refers** to a philosophical approach to policing at every level of law enforcement authority, Baker ( 2011) .It is a model that uses systematically gathered and processed **data and information** as the fundamental basis for strategic planning, operational **decision-making** and generally, proactive policing, Racliffe (2008)
- ❑ **Crash data/ State of Road Safety (Intelligence) reports** refers to the crash data source that provides details of locating / identifying hazardous locations, road sections, identifying risk factors, remedial measures and evaluating the effectiveness of road safety programmes.
- ❑ **Epidemiology** refers to a study and analysis of the distribution ( who , when and where) patterns and determinants of crash risk conditions in defined populations, it is a evidence based practice that identifies risk factors for crash conditions and aids to target preventative policing. Wikipedia (accessed 1 November 2020)
- ❑ **Accidentology** is a study to predict where most crashes are likely to occur in future and use this data for proactive deployment Ratcliffe( 2016)

# DELIBERATION QUESTIONS

- What evidence is available regarding the effectiveness of existing law enforcement intervention measures.
- What are the limitations and challenges that prevents the effectiveness of law enforcement and impact.
- Can the use of technology in law enforcement aid to transform change the road user behavior?
- What lessons can be learned from the SUN & Canada countries and what Programmes can be borrowed to enrich the role of law enforcement in preventing road crashes.

# THE ROAD SAFETY PROBLEM STATEMENT



- ❑ The **rapid urban development and urbanization** is prompting the growth of demand of traffic and movement world-wide, significantly escalating the increase in externalities such as road traffic congestion and road traffic accidents (RTA) (Xiao et al, 2024).
- ❑ The **Road traffic accidents (RTAs) are identified as the 11th leading cause of mortality** (WHO, World Report, 2004; WHO, World Health Day, 2004), claiming about 1.3 million lives globally and impacting about 20 –50 million individuals in a form of injuries or disabilities (Mohamed et al, 2023; S.A. Transport Department, 2016; Mofomme, 2019).
- ❑ **The low- and middle-income countries contribute to 93% of the global road traffic fatalities (Mohamed et al, 2023).**
- ❑ According to Bantjes et al (2024), **the pedestrian fatality rate is about 40% in Africa** which is the highest in proportion globally, which is indicative that the lack of effective approaches and interventions will lead to a pandemic. Jadaan et al ( 2018) raised alarms that the pedestrians are at their most vulnerable in Ghana and South Africa.
- ❑ **The RSA and Nigeria collectively (for the region )** contributes half of the road fatalities ( Jacobs et al, 2000) . That said, the road related fatalities remain high in RSA compared to other African nations ( Ncube et al, 2016).



## THE ROAD SAFETY PROBLEM STATEMENT CONTINUED ....



- ❑ **The road traffic death rate in 2016 for the RSA was 25.9 per 100 000 of the population** which exceeded the average rates of middle-income countries ( 18.0) and high-income countries ( 7.7) and slightly lower than that of lower income countries (28.3) WHO (2018;309-313). In 2017, the impact of **road accidents in RSA amounted to ZAR 162 .05 billion ( 3,5% of the GDP).**
- ❑ **In the Kingdom of Eswatini an average of 6.697 road crashes per year** are reported with a 3<sup>rd</sup> requiring a personal injury claim from the MVA fund
- ❑ Tandarayen - Ragoobur ( 2023 ) argued that there is a relationship between the GDP , Labour and road traffic crashes in that for each road accident the GDP and labour force of the country are negatively impacted while more strain is placed on government resources – fiscus, increase in demand for health services due to disabilities and injuries the repair cost for the road infrastructure.
- ❑ The realization of the ineffectiveness and heterogeneous road management practices prompted the United Nation to initiate the Sustainable Development Goals with two targets;
  - 1) to halve global deaths and injuries from road traffic crashes by 2030, and;
  - 2) provide access to safe, affordable, and sustainable transport systems for all.
- ❑ The objective is to reduce road traffic fatalities and injuries by at least 50% during 2021 to 2030.
- ❑ **Consequently, some governments designed a National Road Safety Strategy to trigger mitigating measures on road crashes.**

# THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RSA NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

❑ The 5 pillars of the RSA Cabinet approved Road Safety Strategy 2030 read with the UNDA are:

- Road Safety Management
- **Safer Roads and Mobility**
- **Safer Vehicles**
- **Safer road users**
- Post crash response

Triggered and impacted  
by the road user behavior

Law enforcement  
must enforce the  
provisions of laws


❑ **The 4 E's in law enforcement policing**

- Engineering / Education / **Enforcement** / Evaluation.

# THE CATEGORY OF FATAL CRASHES TYPES AND ROAD SAFETY CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS REPORT ( ROAD SAFETY CRASH DATA)

❑ In the RSA, the following top 4 category of crash types are consistent over 5-year period

- Pedestrians (31%)
- Single vehicles overturning ( 19%)
- Hit and runs (17%)
- Head on collisions (10%)



Although the causes range , speed is a common denominator

❑ Road Safety data contributory factors reports for a period of 5 years

- Human behaviour (87%)
- Vehicles ( 6%)
- Road and environment ( 8%)

## COUNTRIES WITH REMARKABLE ROAD CRASHES REDUCTION RATES (BENCH MARKING TAKE AWAYS)



- ❑ Koornstra et al, (2002) in his quest to understand the causes of the reduction of fatal crashes and fatalities, undertook a comparative study of the development of Road Safety in **Sweden ,United Kingdom and the Netherlands** (SUN countries) where upon he identified that they all had a low rates of fatal crashes and fatalities and all had the same road safety approach at strategic , tactical and operational level. According to the year 2000 comparative crash data, Sweden had 591 with a population of 8,882, the UK had 3 ,409 with a population of 58, 058 and the Netherlands had 1.092 with a population of 15,864.
- ❑ According to the Road Safety in **Canada** , Transport Canada (2016), the Canadian fatalities have declined by about 62% from 1990 to 2014 and the number of pedestrian fatalities declined by 68% during the same period.
- ❑ Crash related fatalities and injuries can be prevented and or minimized through the **effective enforcing of laws relating to key risk factors and raising public awareness** ( Mohan, 2002) .
- ❑ Combating road fatalities can be attained through enforcing effective measures such as **safety standards** for roads , **vehicles and legislation to mitigate high risk behaviors** ( WHO , 2018).

# LAW ENFORCEMENT LIMITATIONS



- The National Prosecution System ( NPA) in RSA is not supporting the re -classification of road traffic offences e.g. the reclassification of serious road offences to schedule 6 such as Murder and Robbery .
- The Courts in RSA offers traffic offenders an alternative sentencing administration process instead of offenders serving jail time eg community work as sentence .
- The slow implementation of AARTO ( Point demerit system )
- Nonpayment / poor payment of fines rates ( 3% )
- Poor funding for the implementation of the National Road Safety Strategy 2016 -2030 (NRSS)
- Failure to implement 24/ 7 deployment nationwide ( RSA ) and the National Road Traffic Law Enforcement Code
- An emerging trend on the focus on crime prevention by traffic authorities rather than the enforcement of road traffic offences ( road fatalities are more on average compared to crime related cases )



# RECOMMENDATIONS



- Law enforcement plays a pivotal role in the reductions of road crashes to mitigate the high human factor contribution to the causes of fatal crashes.
- The introduction of the SADC wide 24/ 7 aggressive selected enforcement on speed, drunk driving and pedestrian law enforcement can turn the reduction of fatal crashes situation around.
- The funding of the Road Safety education and Awareness campaigns must be prioritised to attain the NRSS % UNDA 2030 50% targets.
- The use of technology can aid in the changing of human behaviour by creating an atmosphere of law enforcement omnipresence.
- Introduce Epidemiology in law enforcement and Accidentologists
- Invest in the improvement of intelligence led policing

# Discussion