

Tourism stakeholders fight back

MBOMBELA - A reward has been issued for any information leading to the arrest and successful conviction of the man who raped a tourist in Graskop on September 1.

Linda Grimbeek, COO of Kruger Lowveld Chamber of Business and Tourism (KLCBT), said they were offering up to R50 000 for any information leading to the arrest and successful conviction of the rapist.

"Right now, South Africa is presenting as an unsafe country for foreigners, particularly women, and horror stories are making headlines across the world," she said. Grimbeek said the Graskop incident followed shortly after the robbery of a well-known hotel in Cape Town and a murder of a tourist at Table Mountain.

"In context what was happening in the rest of South Africa, this story quickly made the international headlines and did serious damage to our local tourism industry," she said. "In the Lowveld, most of us are dependent on tourism for a livelihood, for jobs and tourism establishments buy from other businesses again. It is a long value chain that needs to be protected. This is why we decided that some sort of intervention is required."

After meetings with various stakeholders, including the MEC for community safety, security and liaison as well as senior members of SAPS, and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, it was decided that this will be one of several initiatives to be rolled out that will aid to prevent crimes against tourists.

"KLCBT will soon launch an initiative where businesses give support to SAPS to implement whatever means is necessary to increase visible policing, surveillance, better

equipment and training. The initiative will collect funds, other donations and volunteers to assist with these functions in conjunction with SAPS," Grimbeek said.

Anyone with information, can contact their nearest police station or the investigating officer on 082-779-8586. The identity of the informants will be treated as confidential.

