



2022 May, 12

**Minister Frikkie Mbalula**  
(Attention PA Zintle)

[TransportMinistry@dot.gov.za](mailto:TransportMinistry@dot.gov.za)

**BMA Project Management** Gen David Chilembe  
Office also att: **Maphoko Letsoalo**  
Department of Home Affairs  
Tel: +27 12 432 6631

[david.chilembe@dha.gov.za](mailto:david.chilembe@dha.gov.za)

[Maphoko.Letsoalo@dha.gov.za](mailto:Maphoko.Letsoalo@dha.gov.za)

**Chief Director: Property and Facilities**  
Att: Vukani Nxasana  
Department of Home Affairs  
Tel: +27 12 4064024

[Vukani.Nxasana@dha.gov.za](mailto:Vukani.Nxasana@dha.gov.za)

**Town Planning Services(TPS)**  
Att: Gudani Magau  
National Department of Public Works  
Tell: +27 12 406 1928

[Gudani.magau@dpw.gov.za](mailto:Gudani.magau@dpw.gov.za)

**KLCBT** Ms Linda Grimbeek

[linda@klcbt.co.za](mailto:linda@klcbt.co.za)

By email

Sirs, Lady

## **URGENT INTERVENTION REQUESTED**

### **CONGESTION & CRIME - LEBOMBO BORDER POST**

#### **Introduction**

The excessive congestion of truck traffic in and around Komatipoort, and more specifically on the N4 leading up to the Lebombo Border Post, has become a crisis which is now totally out of hand and uncontrolled. This situation has a severe impact on the safety of local residents, road users, the local economy, as well as farmers and other businesses in and around Komatipoort.

Komatipoort has become unsafe, and the crisis deepens daily. Crime occurs daily on the congested N4, especially closer to the border post. It includes armed robbery, theft, assault. The crime spills over to the residential town. From 19h00 to 06h00 the absence of police and traffic officers is obvious. Criminals opportune this time slot. This explains why the long que



of stacked trucks on the N4 disregard this queuing at this time of the 24-hour day. For safety and convenience purposes the drivers flock and park close to each other. This conduct results in the blocking of all traffic from any direction to the border post. The business at the BP filling station is gridlocked. Accidents occur, most of them unnecessary. If urgent intervention does not follow soon, crime will sweep through this border town. Truck drivers, very often sitting in 15 km queues, have no toilet facilities and no access to food and running water for several hours of their wait to reach the border.

### **Perspective**

1. Before the 24-hour opening of the border, the stacking was worse. The pandemic mitigated crime and movement. There has been slight change since then, but this has been negated by the increase in the number of trucks approaching the border post daily. The chamber takes note of and appreciates the difficult implementation of the 24/7 open hours of the border post. As Mr van Neel explained, who granted us opportunity to disclose the crisis to him and participate in the finding of solutions, these kinds of decisions, involve cross border bilateral unanimous decisions and implementation. Thanks again for what has been done.
2. If the intention is that the Lebombo Post entertains around 2000 trucks daily, this will materialise only if some changes are implemented urgently. The fleet owners and clearance businesses indicate that approximately 1400 trucks presently pass through Lebombo daily. Since the border opened 24 hours, approximately 300 of the 1400 pass through between midnight and 06h00.
3. Why the long line of stacked trucks alongside the N4? Why not less? Why not parked in the so-called Dry Port facility? Why only 300 vehicles from midnight to dusk? Crime is the symptomatic expression of the actual problem. Yet crime has manifested exponentially and should urgently be tackled, or it will consume the whole town. This cannot be stayed. Together with KLCBT, to whom we are affiliated, we met the MEC Safety and Security and some of the heads of police a couple of weeks ago. The consequence was increased deployment, of staff, during day hours. It is welcomed, yet not enough. From 19h00 to 06h00 crime dominates the N4.

### **Complexity of demanding queuing**

We are aware that the effort to que the trucks, is not simple. If a driver possesses over all the required papers and cargo, how can it be expected from him to sit in a que behind people who do not possess over what is required? His mandate is speedy delivery, and he meets all requirements. A categorical demand that all drivers simply que does not do justice to the industry. It is a weak symptomatic effort, whilst the core problem – more lanes and control in Mozambique are far more critical. TRAC recommended at one of our meetings that more truck stops are welcomed. More stop over facilities, where the drivers have ease of access



and egress and receive their clearance papers, are indeed helpful. This can be advocated. Facilities like these need not all be in Komatipoort; they may be alongside the N4, and could be further away from the Border. Examples are Heymans Kole, Isuza and others.

### Diagnosing the actual problem

1. Symptomatically it appears as if the roots of the problem are that the paperwork takes too long, and that no truck parks inside the Dry Port. Our assessment is that these are not the core problems, but only assumed problems. 95% of clearance is pre-clearing, and in as far as clearing is concerned, what is demanded from drivers at Komatipoort merely is a basic collection, a quick procedure. Truck drivers do not stop inside the Dry Port, since the excessive queue of trucks to pass through the border adds to a congested entrance into and from the Dry Port, and they fear they may take too long to get out of the N4 to the border. What is necessary, is quicker movement through the Border Post.
2. Why then does this not happen, the demanded quicker flow? There is more than one cause. In a whole the following are the dominant causes, and some relate to operations on the Mozambican side. Mainly, there are too few lanes to accommodate the higher volume properly at the border itself. It can be argued too that the weighbridge activities are not necessary, here – or being conducted at the wrong site. And then there is the behaviour of drivers, some understandable, some ignorant. We elaborate on them, to explain why your radical immediate intervention is required and may not be stayed any longer.
3. The lanes inside the border post: We are aware that presently only two lanes accommodate the traffic into and from Mozambique. A third is considered. The one lane is for going, the other for returning. When passing through, passports should be stamped (Immigration) and the Bill of Entry checked (Customs). This takes a few minutes and when it flows, it flows. Yet in the event of mineral related cargo, these formalities are less stringent – and a lane that permits mineral related cargo to pass through without all this red tape, will take a large quantity of vehicles away from the stacked line of vehicles. This solution is extremely urgent, executable, and should in our opinion enjoy the highest priority. If necessary, emergency funds should be unlocked to get this going, since a disaster is in the making - the longer this is stayed, and the solution remains a dream.
4. Mozambican red tape and nuisance. The need for this additional lane speaks also from what awaits drivers in Mozambique. When a general cargo truck is stopped for inspection in Moz, it is stopped not in a designated area, but in the flow of traffic. It blocks the flow categorically. This incomprehensive methodology should be addressed and stopped. Managing this behaviour transcends the fleet owners' powers. Only the international relationship can address this. It should be addressed without delay.



- 
5. Similarly in Mozambique, at kilometre 4, there is a resistance to accept electronic payments and discrepancies in entertaining matters. It is behavioural matter, again. It demands higher command address.

### **Immediate intervention necessary**

*Immediate appropriate intervention hence demands:*

1. **Traffic control and policing all 24 hours of the day, all hours** the border post is open. That deals with the crime.
2. **A mineral cargo dedicated lane** should be opened soonest, even with temporary structures, to ease flow.
3. **Command over the handling of inspections etc on the Mozambican side**, by channelling suspect cargo carriers out of the lane of flow to designated areas, will bring immediate relief. The challenges at km 4 also demand proper command.

### **Additional possible measures to consider**

1. Except for the above proposals, the following should be noted: truck drivers fear to stay over, sleep or stop for too long at night especially between midnight and 06h00, on the Mozambican side. The crime incidence is too high, the theft of batteries, etc. Hence the inclination to stay on the SA side and leaving later rather than.
6. We are informed that some of the trucks are weighed 7 times from leaving collection points to eventually delivering their cargo, and this is challenging. Time is of the essence, and the cargo mostly remains the same from unloading to delivering, and most vehicles are equipped with tracing apparatus. The likelihood of a change in the weight is in most cases unimaginable. If Jeppes Reef is utilised, a relative short distance from Lebombo, the question is why this cannot suffice, at least till the flow is better and the queue shorter, as a last weigh point. Less trucks then have to move in and out in an entrance at the SA Dry Port, which as it is presently, is by far inadequately prepared (access and egress) to accommodate this high volume of traffic. This is a suggestion to mitigate the congestion at the Dry Port.
7. Our understanding is that fleet owners are willing to financially contribute to the establishment at the border post of improved facilities to ease flow. Yet, when a matter is a crisis, and the present situation is a crisis, it amazes that the State does not find emergency funds and deals with it immediately. How many people must die or lose money, and what kind of losses in the turnover of business and state income have to be suffered, before what is critically necessary, is decided and done.



## Request

The town suffers as a result of the inadequate management of the truck flow through the border. Immediate attention to the flow at the border post itself, as suggested or similarly, cannot be stayed. **Policing all 24 hours till peace and order normalize, is critical and cannot be stayed. The creation of the third dedicated mineral cargo lane, and command over particular performances and failures on the Mozambican side is critical and should be done without delay. We call upon the RSA leadership to implement these measures immediately.** Our suggestions and similar ideas to improve the crisis should be considered and those workable, implemented without delay.

Kindly acknowledge receipt. We shall appreciate your replying answer or an opportunity to meet at earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

### MANAGEMENT - KOMATIPOORT BUSINESS CHAMBER

Jan Engelbrecht, John O'Reilly, Richard Williams, Minette du Plessis, Wentzel de Wet, Caroline O'Reilly

management@komatipoort.org.za  
www.komatipoort.org.za  
KLCBT **0137551988** (office hours)  
List of members available on request



*An affiliated member-chamber of*