

Golden Arrow Bus Services (Pty) Ltd

**Media Release
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ROBBERIES: WHAT GOLDEN ARROW IS DOING

Golden Arrow is extremely concerned about crime spilling onto our buses. To place these incidents into context, the scourge of violence and criminality is not happening just to Golden Arrow. Other essential services such as ambulances, paramedics and fire services are also coming under attack.

Golden Arrow has made its concerns regarding these incidents known to the National Department of Transport, the Provincial and National Commissioners of Police, the Provincial Department of Transport and the Standing Committee on Transport and Public Works as well as other relevant government entities.

Golden Arrow is contracted to operate scheduled public transport services on behalf of the Western Cape Provincial Department of Transport and Public Works (PDOT). We are in constant communication with the PDOT regarding crime on buses and we provide them with facts and figures on a monthly basis. We hold regular meetings with officials of the PDOT to discuss these issues.

While GABS recognises that it has a role to play, the primary responsibility for ensuring public safety falls squarely within the jurisdiction of the South African Police Services. The principal responsibility of SAPS, as stated in The Constitution of South Africa, is “to prevent, combat and investigate crime; maintain and protect the public, their property and the overall security and safety of the Republic; uphold and enforce the law...”. This cannot be downplayed as it is vital to the well-being of all citizens and underpins the very functioning of our society.

Along with our passengers and staff, the Company is the victim of criminal behaviour, not the perpetrator. We do feel that continuously shifting the responsibility for crime prevention onto a private company is simply a convenient way to ignore the failure of the authorities to carry out their constitutional mandates.

As a responsible company, Golden Arrow has over time nonetheless implemented many initiatives to attempt to address the situation and continues, on an ongoing basis, to explore

additional measures to counteract the criminal acts directed at our passengers, staff and buses.

Below are some of the initiatives that Golden Arrow has already implemented:

- Negotiated and operated a 6-month contract between City Law Enforcement and GABS with dedicated police on buses, to deter the robberies on buses. This was extremely effective as robberies were reduced by more than 70%. This was regrettably terminated at the beginning of March 2020. The reason for termination being a shortage of resources on the City's side
- Arranged regular follow-up meetings with SAPS to discuss case numbers and the status of cases.
- Implemented a toll-free hotline for passengers and the general public to report information and/or provide tip-offs. Every tip-off and/or information received is handed over to the SAPS Crime Intelligence Division. Crime Intelligence is currently investigating a few persons of interest based on information received via the hotline
- Established a reward of up to R200 000 for the successful arrest and conviction of suspects
- Made use of the back of buses to advertise the reward and hotline
- Gained a permanent seat in the JOC (Joint Operations Centre) where all incidents of crime are discussed and reported directly to SAPS, Law Enforcement, Traffic and Metro Police
- Set-up weekly review meetings with SAPS, Law Enforcement and Metro Police
- Implemented systems that highlight all hotspot areas and report these to SAPS who then monitor these areas more closely
- Introduced procedures to record all incidents and to present these to the various role players at the weekly joint meetings
- Networked a direct line of communication to the Commanding Officers of the various hotspot areas
- Set-up a dedicated task team within the company to deal with robberies and/or violence
- Worked closely with neighbourhood watches and crime prevention groups to share intelligence and highlight hotspots.
- Co-operated with SAPS, Law Enforcement, Metro Police and Traffic Control who conduct daily stop and search operations on the company's buses as part of their crime prevention activities

- Advised on a daily operational plan for vehicle deployment in the hotspot areas as delegated by SAPS
- Provided standing instructions to drivers to proceed to the nearest police station for assistance should they detect any individual(s) acting suspiciously on their bus
- Held monthly meetings with each of the representative trade unions within the company. These meetings provide a forum for the dissemination and discussion of matters pertinent to the safety and security of employees. The meetings afford the respective trade unions the opportunity to participate in finding solutions to the various issues that are raised
- Gained representation on the Khayelitsha Economic Forum on which representatives of businesses operating in the Khayelitsha area, SAPS and Business Against Crime personnel participate. Issues of mutual interest, including criminal activities in Khayelitsha area, are discussed. Khayelitsha has been identified as a hotspot for robberies
- Solicited the inputs of community-based organisations and has formalised the establishment of an internal unit within the company's operations division which focusses solely on matters of safety and security and the co-ordination of liaison with stakeholders
- Trauma counselling for each victim of crime on our buses is available through SAPS structures

Projects which have been approved and are being prioritised:

- Has been in discussion with City of Cape Town and Province to renew a 3-year contract with Law Enforcement. We are currently waiting for the final draft of the contract and signatures by City Management. GABS will contribute funding towards the establishment and operation of the unit.
- GABS will be fitting drop safes (which will be impossible to open off-site) on its fleet of buses. Statistics show that 57% of recent robberies have been directed at the driver's cash takings only. Other bus companies have reduced robberies by up to 99% through the use of drop safes and it will therefore form one part of our multi-pronged approach
- The deployment of security personnel to assist with stop and search on selected routes
- The fitment of specialised security cameras on buses. This is already being piloted.

- Introduction of panic buttons that can be linked to a GPS system and monitored by all mobile City Law Enforcement units. The design process is already underway but is slowed down by the complexity of linking private and government systems
- The development of an app that could possibly be used by passengers as a live panic button

Ultimately, what is needed is a collaborative approach between government, GABS and civil society. As an operator GABS cannot replace the role that SAPS and government must play in securing our passengers and staff. It is a gross dereliction of their constitutionally-mandated duty to the people of South Africa that such fundamental civic responsibilities are being shifted to private companies and ultimately citizens themselves.

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