

Golden Arrow Bus Services (Pty) Ltd

**Media Release
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GABS, SAPS, CITY AND PROVINCE UNITED TO TACKLE BUS ROBBERIES

Golden Arrow Bus Services is very pleased to report that the South African Police Services and City of Cape Town's Safety and Security portfolio are working together, with us, in a structured way to combat robberies on our buses.

It has always been our contention that a unified front would be the only way to tackle this problem and that Golden Arrow could not do it alone. This strengthened relationship has already showed positive progress after two recent sets of arrests.

On Friday 12 February three suspicious males were spotted waiting at a bus stop on the Corner of New Eisleben and Miller Road in Crossroads– the three men matched the description of three suspects who had previously targeted Golden Arrow buses. The suspects attempted to flee and all three were subsequently apprehended in Lusaka informal settlement.

On Monday 15 February two suspects were observed at Town Centre in Mitchells Plain waiting to board a bus to Cape Town. Unbeknownst to the suspects the bus driver was informed to proceed directly to Mitchells Plain SAPS. The two suspects were subsequently arrested and one was found to have a knife in his possession.

The next step will be to link all five suspects to previous crimes and ensure a successful prosecution.

“Earlier this month I have called on the Ministers of Police and Public Transport to consider establishing a dedicated unit within the SAPS to investigate crimes related to public transport – be it armed robberies, arson attacks, or the sabotage of infrastructure. The Criminal Matters Amendment Act provides for stricter bail conditions and harsher sentences, including up to 30 years' imprisonment, for those caught and convicted of destruction of essential infrastructure. It is intended as a deterrent against attacks on essential infrastructure, among which public transport infrastructure. However, we need the SAPS to apprehend the perpetrators and prepare high quality dossiers that will assist in getting these criminals successfully prosecuted and convicted. A dedicated unit, focusing on public

transport related crimes, will assist a great deal in this regard,” said the City’s Mayoral Committee Member for Transport, Alderman Felicity Purchase.

“The various enforcement agencies are to be commended for the arrests. It is by working together that we will keep our commuters safer and end these cowardly crimes targeting residents who are simply on their way to or from work; or running errands. The City’s Safety and Security Directorate will continue to do its part in ensuring these criminals are caught and brought to book,” said Alderman JP Smith, Mayoral Committee Member for Safety and Security, City of Cape Town.

“Serious and violent crimes are high on the priority list of the Western Cape police and every endeavour is being made to bring to an end the latest trend where robberies are perpetrated on buses. Partnership policing and a holistic approach between all role-players are the major factors at play to ensure the safety of commuters. Inroads are being made in this regard, and the recent arrest of perpetrators is the point of departure for many more crime combatting initiatives to follow in this province,” said Colonel André Traut, SAPS Provincial Commander: Media Communication.

Western Cape Minister of Transport and Public Works, Bonginkosi Madikizela said: “All stakeholders have made excellent progress in recent weeks. The Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works and Golden Arrow Bus Services are on the brink of testing a technological solution aimed at eliminating the problem. I am confident that the narrative around safety on Golden Arrow Buses will be a very different one in the coming weeks”.

In the interim Golden Arrow is testing two separate sets of cameras and panic buttons. A third set of cameras will also be fitted for testing in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Transport. The panic button app is in development and drops safes will also be installed as a pilot. Announcements will be made regarding the dedicated Bus Enforcement Unit as soon as possible.

With the assistance of SAPS and the City hotspot areas will be assigned additional resources and stop and searches will continue. We appeal to passengers to co-operate with the authorities in this regard.

Unfortunately, we do not believe that this problem will be solved immediately although it is being addressed with urgency. Golden Arrow will continue to lobby on behalf of our staff and passengers and to co-operate with and assist the authorities in any way that we can.

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