

LAWLESS LAWYERS:

Metro Mayhem

— by Peter Hammond



Thousands caught in peak-hour gridlock

By Amanda Munn

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Thousands of commuters were caught in a peak-hour gridlock on Wednesday as Metro police officers blocked the N2 highway towards the city. The police officers, who were protesting over staff restructuring and the new grades, drove their official police vehicles in a convoy towards the city, and then slowed the early morning traffic to a crawl. Rush hour traffic ground to a halt from 7am as the Metro police blocked the N2 at the Mowbray off-ramp chokepoint.

Many passengers had to abandon their public transport and walk to the city while members of the South African Police Services desperately tried to control the chaos caused.

The Metro police claimed that they were protesting over staff restructuring and the new grades. To publicise their demands for more pay, they chose to disrupt early morning rush hour traffic – without apparently considering how many tens of thousands of Cape Town ratepayers, parents taking their children to school, staff trying to make it to work on time, self-employed entrepreneurs trying to make a living, and even emergency services trying to rush people to hospital were inconvenienced.



Commuters were horrified that lawmen dedicated to protecting the public could cause such lawless chaos, obstruct commuters for hours and frustrate free enterprise causing literally tens of millions of rands in accumulative losses for the city and its rate-payers and companies.

“Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law resist them. Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully.” Prov 28:4-5

Mayor Helen Zille condemned the wildcat strike as illegal. “There are proper channels through which anyone can express grievances, especially in a restructuring process, and for a handful of people to disrupt the lives of thousands of other people, especially when they are to protect that community, is unacceptable and we will take action.”

The City of Cape Town suspended 87 Metro police officers who took part in the disruption of N2 traffic. City spokesperson, Pieter Cronje, said that criminal charges were being laid against a number of the strikers including: unlawful strike action; violations of the Firearms Act; obstructing traffic; endangering the lives of people by forcing them to walk on a freeway and defeating the ends of justice.

He pointed out that the strikers had been warned ahead of time that they were risking their careers and “if they are convicted of a criminal offence, they will not be able to work in the City Police Force in the future. They could also face summary dismissal, given the seriousness of their actions.”

“When the righteous thrive the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan...by justice a king gives the country stability, but one who is greedy for bribes tears it down.” Prov 29:2-4 ■

“When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?” Psalm 11:3

Commuters were shocked when Metro Police brought rush-hour traffic to a standstill in Cape Town. The N2 highway towards the city is clogged and jammed with traffic at the best of times. On Wednesday 15 August, over 100 Metro policemen, driving their official police vehicles, travelled in convoy towards the city, and then slowed the early morning traffic to a crawl. Rush hour traffic ground to a halt from 7am as the Metro police blocked the N2 at the Mowbray off-ramp chokepoint.