

DUELING WITH DEATH...

FOUR GRENSWAG LEARNERS HIT BY TAXIS ON R510



Devan Steenkamp in hospital.



Our children's lives are at risk on the R510.

Rustenburg – The safety of the crossing at Hoërskool Grenswag has been an ongoing concern for the Rustenburg community.

This road has proven time and again to be a safety hazard for learners crossing the R510 as some drivers just blatantly speed by. *Platinum Weekly* reported on 14 September 2018 that in one month, two students were hit by vehicles on this busy crossing. Almost a year later, in just two days, four more learners nearly lost their lives at the hands of speeding drivers.

On Tuesday 3 September (reportedly) Devan Steenkamp and his friend Nathan Lubbe were crossing the road when a taxi, avoiding the speedhumps illegally, sped down in the bus lane and hit the learners. Luckily the two boys were not seriously injured.

In an interview with *Platinum Weekly*, Ilse-Mae Endres, Devan's mother said: "I was getting ready for work when I got the call saying that Devan was hit by a taxi on his way to school. I have never been so scared in my life. When I got to the scene, Devan's sister was sitting next to him, holding his hand and crying. The thoughts that go through your mind at that moment are terrifying."

The very next day, 4 September, Kelebogile Botha and another student were crossing the road when they were hit by a taxi – (reportedly) again illegally driving in the bus lane avoiding the speedhumps. Kelebogile broke her leg and was transported to hospital for treatment. The other student was only grazed by the taxi but was taken to hospital to make sure that her injuries weren't serious. Community leaders and the police are concerned that taxi drivers are ignoring traffic rules by failing to slow down whenever they approach the crossing.

A concerned resident, ward 18 councillor Martha Lerm, said: "I talked to the girl soon after the accident and she was in terrible pain. We must act before someone dies." For years Martha fought for the safety of these learners and little by little improvements were made.

After the second accident this year, a meeting was arranged with all stakeholders; it was decided that the bus lane must be barricaded. The Rustenburg Local Municipality did not have trucks available to transport the barricades; however, Anton's Towing stepped up and transported the barricades, free of charge.

"I would like to thank them for their huge contribution as we could not have done it without them. We have successfully barricaded the bus lanes. Furthermore, I will apply for a pedestrian bridge and a fence to force the children to walk only at the pedestrian crossing. From today, traffic officers will be assisting in the mornings and afternoons to get the learners safe across the road," Martha said.

Police spokesperson captain Elsabé Augoustides told *Platinum Weekly* that the taxi driver involved in Wednesday's accident has been charged with negligent driving. Investigations continue.

FOR MORE INFO OR BOOKINGS CONTACT:
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Kelebogile Botha after the accident.

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