



DELIBERATE DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

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Cape Town is facing a deliberate attempt to destroy its public transport infrastructure and this could have a devastating effect on the local economy.

The comment comes after yet another Metrorail coach was torched this week.

If you put these arson attacks together with attacks on the signalling system and copper theft which paralyses the rail service it is difficult to draw any other conclusion.

Last month there were three arson attacks and a failed one. In July 32 coaches were damaged in attacks which inflicted more than R50m of damage to trains and rail infrastructure. In addition, both Golden Arrow and the MiCiti bus services have lost vehicles in arson attacks.

The cumulative damage to Metrorail is staggering for it is now down to just 50 full trainsets and this means it has lost more than 40% of its trains over the last few years and we still don't know why.

Some of the attacks had taken place in the main station in the CBD where one would assume security was good.

We are also looking at a failure of law enforcement as neither the Police, the Railway Police or the private security companies employed by Metrorail have been able to make any headway. We have no crime intelligence on why this orgy of destruction is taking place. We've had just one arrest in the failed arson attempt last month and that has not yet produced any breakthrough that we are aware of.

Cape Town was already paying a high price for the attacks on public transport in the form of congestion, absenteeism and lost productivity. .No city of nearly four million people can function without public transport. Unless we get on top of this problem Cape Town will suffer lasting damage to its economy.

Janine Myburgh

President of the Cape Chamber



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