



Three Toyota Hilux Muscle Through to Dakar Top 10

16 January 2017

The Toyota Hilux's formidable reputation has been put to the test in the Dakar, the world's toughest motor race, which concluded in Buenos Aires on Sunday after 13 days and a distance of almost 5,500 miles across some of South America's most challenging terrain. Three mighty Hilux proved their strength to finish in the top-10 classification.

First crew home were Nani Roma and navigator Alex Bravo in the Overdrive Racing Hilux in fourth place, with their team-mates Conrad Rautenbach and Rob Howie rounding off the top 10.

It is a testament to the toughness of both the Toyota Gazoo Racing South Africa Hilux and the hugely experienced pairing of Giniel de Villiers and Dirk von Zitzewitz that they were able to overcome severe setbacks to finish fifth – running close to the pace of the podium teams.

Losing around half an hour on the leaders on stage three proved too big a gap for the pair to close, but their performance remained strong enough to claim the third fastest time on the final stage, helping them fend off a late challenge from the Mini of Orlando Terranova.

The team also endured the frustration of an early charge by Nasser Al-Attiyah and Matthieu Baumel ending with retirement – again on stage 3 – due a rear wheel being ripped from the Toyota, severely damaging the suspension. At the time the crew were holding a strong second place overall.

In addition to the three Toyota Hilux vehicles in the top ten, 24 other similar vehicles completed the race - more than any other manufacturer. Toyota also took top honours in class T2.2 for modified diesel vehicles, where the Toyota Land Cruiser 200 GX crews finished first and second in class. The Hino crews also proved their mettle once again, by finishing first and second in class T4.2 for modified trucks.

Despite the tough conditions, Andrew Kirby, President and CEO of Toyota South Africa Motors, Andrew Kirby, was positive about Toyota's results. "In the end this is the ultimate challenge, because it is undoubtedly the toughest motor race in the world. We may not have achieved what we set out to do this year, but we can certainly be proud of our performance. We were first in class T1 4x4, proving once more just how tough our Toyota Hilux is in these extreme conditions."