

03 November 2014

Media Statement on the murder of a paramedic in Eshowe

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo and Head of Department Dr Sibongile Zungu have sent their deepest condolences to the family of an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedic who was shot and killed in Eshowe on Saturday night (01 November 2014).

It is alleged that **Vincent Buthelezi** (35) was driving along the P230 road in Mlalazi next to Nkune, when he came under attack from unknown gunmen. Mr. Buthelezi was a Basic Life Support paramedic and had joined EMS in 2007.

He was off duty at time at the time of the incident. It is alleged that none of his valuables, including his cellphone, were removed from the vehicle. Circumstances around the incident are now the subject of a police investigation.

A memorial service will be held for Buthelezi in Eshowe later this week. The incident comes barely a week after an ambulance with patients on board was hijacked in Umbumbulu, south of Durban.

Dr Dhlomo has condemned the incident, which he described as a “tragedy.” He said that attacks on paramedics place a strain on the Department’s ability to fulfil its mandate of saving lives. Dr Dhlomo has called on members of the community to protect paramedics and create an environment that is conducive to their safety in order to ensure that they operate optimally.

‘The festive season is usually a testing time for EMS paramedics. Right now we are finalizing plans for our Alpha Operation which includes placement of paramedics at strategic points which are known to be accident hotspots. The increasing attacks put the lives of these committed health workers at risk and would eventually negatively impact on our endeavours to improve response times,’ warns Dhlomo.