

MEDIA RELEASE  
18 January 2015

## **KZN Health MEC condemns armed robbery of paramedics in Umlazi**

KWAZULU-Natal Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo has strongly criticised the armed robbery of Emergency Medical Services paramedics in Umlazi in the early hours of this morning.

It is alleged that the paramedics were in the township's B-section at about 4am, trying to locate the address of an assault victim who had called in distress, when they were confronted by six men, some of whom were armed.

The paramedics were ordered out the ambulance, forced to lie on the floor and then robbed of their cell phones and wallets. A Blood Pressure Cuff (BP testing device) was also taken from the vehicle. Fortunately, the paramedics were not harmed.

However, they were shaken by the incident and were transported to hospital where they were treated and discharged.

Dr Dhlomo could not contain his anger at this incident. He said: "I am utterly disgusted by this senseless attack by unscrupulous thugs on our emergency workers. This type of behaviour thwarts our efforts and ability to respond speedily to incidents in order to save lives. We really cannot afford to have a situation whereby our staff members are unable to discharge their duties freely, without having to worry about being attacked," he said.

Dr Dhlomo once again called on members of the community to protect paramedics.

In October 2014, an EMS ambulance with two crew members was hijacked while transporting two patients from KwaMakhutha Clinic to hospital. While one crew member managed to flee, his colleague was bundled into the back of the vehicle along with the patients. The vehicle was driven away and later found abandoned in a different section of KwaMakhutha.

"These incidents are unacceptable and really need to stop," said the MEC.

Issued by the Office of the KZN Health MEC