

MEDIA STATEMENT:
11 March 2016

KZN Health MEC condemns assault and robbery of EMS paramedics in Inanda

Two KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health Emergency Medical Services paramedics are recovering at home after being severely assaulted and robbed while trying to locate a sick woman in the Nhlungwane area, in Inanda, north of Durban, just before midnight on Wednesday (09 March 2016).

The paramedics, aged 52 and 48 respectively, had responded to a distress call about a 34 year-old woman who had been suffering from a case of diarrhoea and vomiting.

It is alleged that while en-route to fetching her, the paramedics were flagged by a group of bystanders. They stopped to assist, but were accosted by a group of five men.

The driver tried to run for help but fell during the incident. Both paramedics were assaulted by the group with a blunt object and sustained injuries.

One of the paramedics sustained an injury to left hand and complained of body pains, while the other sustained general body pains. Both were transported to Umhlanga Hospital in a stable condition, treated and discharged.

KwaZulu-Natal Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo, could not contain his anger at this incident. "I am utterly shocked, angry and 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. These paramedics left what they were doing to attend to a woman who was sick. However, they could not get to her, and no-one knows whether she made it through the night.

"It's time for us as society to take a long, hard look in the mirror and ask ourselves how much longer we can continue to harbour such criminals in our midst. These people must be exposed and subjected to the full might of the law.

"We really cannot afford to have a situation whereby our staff members are unable to discharge their life-saving duties freely, without having to worry about being attacked," he said.

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