

15 July 2016

MEC Kaunda and MEC Dhlomo attend to security issue in KZN hospital following unrests characterised by violence and murder incidents

The KwaZulu-Natal government has beefed up security to protect patients and staff members at four provincial hospitals highly affected by labour unrests which has been characterized by violence and murder incidents.

This morning, KZN MEC for Transport, Community Safety and Liaison, Mxolisi Kaunda, Health MEC, Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo and acting Provincial Police Commissioner, General Bhekinkosi Langa visited King Edward Hospital.

The visit was aimed at assessing the situation and also to engage with security structures and organized labour on plans to improve security at the hospitals.

There are currently seven hospitals that are affected by the latest unrests in areas around Durban but only four have been severely affected.

These include Mahatma Gandhi Hospital; Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital; King Dinuzulu Hospital as well as King Edward Hospital.

The visit by MEC Dhlomo and MEC Kaunda was prompted by the incident of the 13th of July 2016, where two armed intruders were allegedly shot dead by the hospital security. One security guard from the hospital sustained injuries. Police recovered unlicensed firearm and live rounds of ammunition from one of the deceased.

One of the intruders who is believed to be part of the on-going illegal protest was arrested.

The current illegal protests are believed to be linked to labour issues following the decision by the Department of Health to absorb some of the private employees to government systems.

Since beginning of this illegal strike, the police have arrested more than 15 protestors across all the affected hospitals, mainly for violating the Gatherings Act and violating the court order which prohibits them to protest near the hospitals.

After talking to hospital staff and organised labour, MEC Kaunda assured everyone at the hospital that government is now beefing up security and no act of criminality will be tolerated.

“Anyone who is violating the law will be dealt with. There is a court order which needs to be enforced which prohibits protestors to protest in proximity of 500 meters. Police have agreed to beef up security to ensure the safety of patients and hospital staff. We will protect our public institutions and wish to call for calm,” said Kaunda.

MEC Dhlomo welcomed the interventions by MEC Kaunda and the police, saying the on-going illegal protest threatens the lives of both the patients and staff.

“Our staff members now fear for their lives and this situation is unacceptable. We welcome the intervention to beef up security and to increase police visibility. We are willing to address all issues but that must be done within the parameters of the law. Our mandate is to deliver health service to people and that must be done without anyone threatening the lives of our staff. We also want stability in our EThekweni Hospitals as some of them have been designated to be of service to assist delegates who may fall sick during the International Aids Conference starting next week,” said Dr Dhlomo.

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