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MEDIA STATEMENT

Health MEC goes to court to support attacked Clinic staff

KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Health Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo is delighted with the decision of the KwaDukuza Magistrate Court of remanding those suspected of attacking the KwaDukuza Clinic late last week.

The three suspects aged 21; 28 and 31 appeared early this morning [19 December] and were remanded for December 28. The Prosecutor revealed that several charges are being formulated against the three including assault; intimidation as well as malicious damage to property.

It is alleged that on December 14, two health workers were assaulted and government property was damaged when people accompanying a patient to KwaDukuza Clinic decided to turn violent. These people are suspected of being part of the crowd who had been attending a Christmas year-end party where alcohol was served in the Municipal Park adjacent to the clinic.

They are said to have got involved in an argument with the Clinic staff which soon degenerated into attack against health workers. When security tried to intervene the attackers were joined by more revellers from the party. The Clinic security gate was totally removed and destroyed and fortunately security was reinforced by the personnel that happened to pass by as well as the Police who were summoned to the scene. The three suspects who were seen to have led the attack were thus arrested.

In condemning this unwarranted attack, MEC Dhlomo says; 'Even during the days that we were fighting apartheid; nurses and ambulances were never attacked instead they would be given safe passage and protected to attend to those shot by the enemy.'

The attack on health workers and government property is something to be condemned by all. Actually in other states, attack on official and government building is regarded as an act of sabotage.

We are really pleased that the Magistrate in this matter has agreed with the Prosecutor to keep the suspects behind bars until December 28. We hope they will utilize this gloomy time for re-introspective and eventually change their callous ways.'

ENDS