



GAUTENG PROVINCE

HEALTH
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

SUNDAY, 23 JULY 2023

AMBULANCE HIJACKING AND ROBBERY OF PERSONNEL IN NELLMAPIUS EAST OF PRETORIA CONDEMNED

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) condemns in the strongest terms the continued targeting of healthcare workers when discharging their duties in communities by criminals who rob them of their belongings.

In the recent incident the Gauteng Emergency Medical Services (EMS) crew was hijacked, kidnapped, assaulted and robbed of their personal cell phones and other working tools while responding to what appeared to be a distress call from Nellmapius near Mamelodi township. The criminals also used their cards to withdraw money.

This happened on Saturday, 22 July 2023 in the early hours of the morning. An emergency call was registered for a 48 year old male who collapsed of unknown condition. An ambulance was dispatched to the area from the Mamelodi base and on arrival in the vicinity of the address two men waved to stop the crew and when the emergency responders stopped to engage them the men pulled out firearms and forced them to drive to an unknown location. The occupants of the address used to log the call later on reported that they never called for an ambulance.

Both crew members (male and female) were taken to a shack between bushes where they were tied up while the assailants drove away with the ambulance. The team managed to escape to nearby Mavuso squatter camp where they called for help.

The crew managed to activate the panic button before the assailants took the ambulance. All Gauteng EMS operational vehicles including ambulances are fitted with camera technology and tracking devices. This enabled the armed response company to be on the scene within a few minutes while the police made their way. The ambulance was recovered a few minutes later in the same Nellmapius area.

A case has been opened with the Silverton SAPS and the camera footage from the incident has been handed over to the police.

The crew members sustained minor scrapes and bruises and have suffered emotional trauma. Trauma counselling has been arranged accordingly.

The Nellmapius incident follows a separate one that happened two weeks ago when two Dark City CHC healthcare workers were robbed of their belongings while executing their duties in the community of Ekangala by two assailants who were driving in a grey VW Polo vehicle. The police are investigating this case.

The GDoH once again appeals to communities to work with law enforcement agencies to report any information that might assist the police to bring perpetrators to book.

It is hoped that various measures such as the installation of tracking and surveillance devices on EMS vehicles will assist in curbing these disturbing incidents as more perpetrators are brought to book.

The Gauteng Provincial Government through the Department of e-Government is also rolling out phase one of the Gauteng panic button which is being given to healthcare workers and others who work in vulnerable sectors. This will allow for quicker emergency responses in cases of emergencies.

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Issued by the Gauteng Department of Health

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