



MEDIA STATEMENT

TO: ALL MEDIA

ATTENTION: NEWS EDITORS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Substance Abuse Treatment Centre continues to operate and to provide services despite fire that damaged three sites

Gauteng MEC for Social Development Thuliswa Khawe has today condemned what appears to be arson last night in three sites at the Dr. Fabian and Florence Ribeiro Treatment Centre in Cullinan, north of Tshwane.

The damage to the centre, which has been in existence since the 1930's, is estimated at over R1.5 million. The fire started at around 21H30 pm on Thursday evening and affected the main administration block and two other sites.

MEC Khawe said, "As a department, we condemn this barbaric act which appears to be deliberate torching of these buildings which are key in our effort of fighting substance abuse in Gauteng. We call upon those with information to work with the police to ensure that the suspects are apprehended and punished for this vandalism".

MEC has assured that the services at the center are not affected by the fire and service delivery is running smoothly.

The treatment centre has a capacity to accommodate 300 service users (drugs recovering addicts) and currently has just under 200 males, females and children who are mostly there for a six-weeks treatment program.

The center was previously utilized as a concentration camp for Italian prisoners of war during the last world war and after the war it was converted into a work colony for work-shy alcoholics. In the 1970's it was converted into a rehabilitation center for alcohol and drug abuser.

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Issued by the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

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