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| MEDIA RELEASE | PSA alarmed about surge in crime targeting health workers and facilities in KwaZulu-Natal |
| DATE          | 7 December 2023   |
| EMBARGO       | None  |
| ENQUIRIES     | communication@psa.co.za   |

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The Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) is extremely concerned by a surge in crime specifically targeting health workers and facilities in KwaZulu-Natal, which has left healthcare workers in fear.

In the latest incident on 6 December 2023, a Professional Nurse was hijacked in the vicinity of Ekuphileni L uMlazi Clinic. In 2021, criminals invaded at the same Clinic and stole employees' wallets and cell phones. These incidents highlight the urgent need for the Department of Health to conduct risk assessments and implement robust security measures at identified hot spots to ensure employees' protection.

This onslaught of criminal activities has left healthcare workers vulnerable and hesitant in carrying out their duties. Government must heed the alarming desire for health workers in the province to seek transfers away from these criminal hotspots. This is a clear indication of the detrimental impact of these incidents on the morale of healthcare workers. The PSA urges the KwaZulu-Natal South African Police Service Provincial Commissioner and the MEC of Community Safety to heighten police visibility and disarm these dangerous criminals who have turned KwaZulu-Natal into a hub of criminality. The PSA further urges the Department of Employment and Labour to proactively visit health facilities to assess the safety of employees.

Implementation of cutting-edge security measures, including advanced technology, armed-response units, and comprehensive surveillance systems, is paramount to safeguarding employees who strive to provide excellent service. The Department of Health must also prioritise safety defence training for all healthcare workers across clinics, hospitals, and offices. Equipping workers with the necessary skills and knowledge will empower them to better handle unfortunate criminal activities and enhance their overall safety. In view of employees' distress, it is imperative that employee assistance programs are available to affected employees.

The PSA trusts that the South African Police Service will make every effort to locate the stolen vehicle. The Union stands firm in its commitment of ensuring the safety and well-being of healthcare workers. The PSA urges all stakeholders to join forces and collaborate in eradicating this growing menace and restore peace, security, and prosperity to the province.

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