

MEDIA RELEASE

PSA distressed by death of patient in Philadelphia Hospital in Limpopo after attack by mentally unstable patient

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EMBARGO

None

ENQUIRIES

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is distressed by the death of a mental health patient at Philadelphia Hospital in Sekhukhune district in Limpopo on 8 March 2025.

This follows after another patient started to be aggressive towards other patients and staff in Ward 13 in the early hours of the morning on 8 March 2025. Night-duty staff failed to stabilise and calm the patient and called the security guard to assist. When the patient attacked the security guard, the security guard fired a warning shot in an attempt to scare off the aggressive patient. The bullet, however, ricocheted and injured the security guard's leg. The aggressive patient then attacked another patient, throttling him and resulting in his death.

The injured security guard was reportedly immediately admitted to hospital. Meanwhile, the police was summoned to the Hospital to disengage the aggressor from other patients. Rubber bullets were fired, which failed to restrain the aggressor until the police shot him in his leg.

The PSA commends the swift action by the MEC for Health in rushing to the Hospital to assess the situation. The PSA is, however, concerned that the Hospital did not do proper assessment on the aggressive patient upon admission. The institution is an ordinary hospital and not a mental-health institution. The patient should have been transferred to a suitable mental hospital. Alternatively, sufficient security measures should have been provided to ensure that the lives of other patients and employees were not endangered.

This incident underscores the serious challenge that the PSA has raised in respect of failing infrastructure at public healthcare facilities in Limpopo and which the Premier failed to address during recent the State of the Province address. The PSA urges the MEC to provide an explanation to the public on why an aggressive patient was admitted to Philadelphia Hospital without the Hospital providing sufficient security measures.

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