

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**PSA saddened by the merciless killing of an on-duty nurse and calls for improved security at hospitals**

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES [communication@psa.co.za](mailto:communication@psa.co.za)

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing thousands of health professionals across the country learned with sadness about the senseless and barbaric killing of an on-duty nurse in Eastern Cape province. The nurse was brutally murdered by the gunmen who entered Zithulele hospital in Mqanduli under the guise of visiting a patient.

The PSA sends its heartfelt condolences to the nurse's family and calls on the law authorities to ensure that those responsible for this barbaric act are brought to books. It is not the first time that a nurse lost their life while on duty which has proven that access control for most hospitals is very easy, to say the least. It remains questionable how visitors enter hospitals armed without being detected as hospitals are supposed to be gun-free areas. The fact that strangers can enter the hospital with such ease and drag the employee before shooting her like an animal demonstrates porous security. It must be said that the lives of both workers and patients are not safe, and the department needs to quickly close the security gaps.

The PSA has previously cautioned the department to consider security improvement at health institutions, but the department dismally failed to up their security at most of the hospitals. It defies logic why security officers at most hospitals do not even have basic working tools like metal detectors for them to detect visitors that might be armed. The CCTVs are either not installed at most hospitals or were installed, dysfunctional, or not monitored. The screening of visitors is non-existent at most hospitals and the department must account for the killed nurse as they failed to provide a safe working place for their employees. The PSA urges the Minister of Health to commission the conduct of risk assessments in all hospitals to develop minimum security requirements to ensure the safety of employees, patients, and resources. It must be noted that the department as the employer must provide a workplace that is safe and without risk to employees. The Department must also ensure the provision of psychosocial support is offered to both the grieving family and colleagues.

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