



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

To: Editors, Health Journalists; All Media
Issued by: Department of Health
Date: Friday, November 23, 2018

The Department of Health has expressed shock and outrage at the attack on three doctors at Letaba Hospital in Limpopo.

According to information received, three doctors were attacked at the doctors's hospital residences by heavily armed men. The doctors are currently receiving treatment at the hospital.

Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi has expressed shock and outrage at what he termed "barbaric attack" on the health professionals.

"This barbaric attack on doctors should be condemned in the strongest terms possible. But more than that, the law enforcement agencies should be mobilized to ensure that those behind the attacks are apprehended and brought to justice.

"We view the attack on our medical professionals as a declaration of war on the state and the citizens of the republic. We cannot treat this serious violation of the law as just another act of criminality. In this regard, we have escalated the matter to the national minister of police. The Police Minister Bheki Cele, who has just returned from a trip abroad, and I will be visiting the hospital today to get first hand information about what happened and what should be done to ensure swift reaction."

The minister said that even during times of war, health professionals and health facilities were spared the violence as both warring parties understood that health professionals are there to save lives and protect the vulnerable.

"Even during moments of war health facilities are usually spared from attacks. Hence I am saying this acts can not be viewed as ordinary act of criminality, but an attack on the state. We should act with speed and ensure that perpetrators are send to jail," added Motsoaledi.

Several incidents of robberies where doctors were targeted had been reported in the past in other hospitals in the province. Limpopo Health MEC has been working tirelessly with the police in the province to try to ensure the safety of health professionals in hospitals. However, following the latest brazen attack, the matter had to be elevated to the national ministry of police, as it was becoming clearer that this is not just a common issue of criminality..

In the latest incident which occurred in Letaba hospital, it is alleged that heavily armed men easily ran over the security guards of the facility. The terrified guards apparently ran for cover.

"The turn of events make us to believe that this was a well organised attack, possibly by a syndicate operating in the area and targeting our health facilities," said the minister.

Motsoaledi has expressed sadness on the matter and wished those wounded a speedy recovery. He thanked the doctors for their hard work and dedication in saving lives.

Motsoaledi and Cele will visit the hospital today. They are expected to brief the media on the matter at about noon.

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