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Litiko Letemphilo

Departement van Gesondheid

UmNyango WezeMaphilo

**MEDIA STATEMENT.
ALL MEDIA HOUSES
20 JANUARY 2026**

The Mpumalanga MEC for Health strongly condemns the criminal attack, robbery and suspected spiking incident involving two Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel travelling between Steve Biko Academic Hospital and Ermelo on the night of 17 January 2026.

Attacks on emergency medical personnel are unacceptable and place lives at risk. Our paramedics and EMS teams work day and night to save lives under difficult circumstances. They should never be targeted for crime while performing their duties.

We commend the bravery and composure of the affected personnel, as well as the swift coordination between EMS Management, the Middelburg Control Centre and the South African Police Service which led to the safe recovery of both staff members.

The Department is working closely with law enforcement to investigate the incident and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to book. Additional safety measures are being assessed for inter-facility transfers, night-time operations and high-risk routes in order to protect EMS personnel and ensure uninterrupted emergency services for communities.

We call on communities to assist in safeguarding emergency workers and to report any criminal activities that threaten or disrupt the delivery of healthcare services. No society can allow those who save lives to become victims of crime.

Issued by the Communication Directorate. For any inquiries, Contact the Departmental Spokesperson Mr. Dumisani Malamule 067 023 9053 or MEC's Spokesperson Ms Sharon Nkosi on 066 483 9202.