

SAMA MEDIA STATEMENT



SAMA DEMANDS URGENT ACTION TO PROTECT HEALTHCARE WORKERS

24 January 2025

The South African Medical Association (SAMA) condemns in the strongest terms the horrific attack at Chuene Clinic in Limpopo earlier this month, where two nurses were reportedly abducted at gunpoint and assaulted during their night shift.¹ This incident represents a severe breach of healthcare worker safety and highlights the urgent need for comprehensive security reforms across all healthcare facilities.

The incident at Chuene Clinic has intensified growing concerns about inadequate security measures at healthcare facilities, particularly those operating 24/7 in rural areas. When medical professionals cannot safely perform their duties, especially during critical night shifts, it puts entire communities at risk of losing access to essential healthcare services.

The current security infrastructure at many of the country's healthcare facilities is dangerously inadequate and one cannot expect our healthcare workers to continue providing essential services while their lives are at risk. SAMA urges the National Department of Health to allocate emergency funding for immediate security upgrades at vulnerable facilities and to establish a dedicated task force to oversee the implementation of comprehensive security reforms. Furthermore, SAMA urges the Minister of Finance to prioritise healthcare worker safety in the upcoming Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) by allocating specific funding for comprehensive security infrastructure upgrades across all public healthcare facilities. Without this urgent investment, we risk seeing an exodus of healthcare workers from night shift duties, which would devastate our healthcare system's ability to provide 24-hour care.

This is not just a healthcare issue, it is a societal crisis that demands immediate attention from all stakeholders. SAMA calls upon the government, law enforcement agencies, and communities to work together to ensure the safety of our healthcare workers, who serve as the backbone of our healthcare system.

(ENDS)

Notes to Editors

About SAMA: The South African Medical Association ("SAMA") was established in 1927 and became known as it is today through the unification of a variety of doctors' groups on 21 May 1998 that had represented a diversity of interests. SAMA is a non-statutory, professional association for public and private sector medical practitioners. SAMA is registered a non-profit company in terms of the

¹ <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/two-nurses-kidnapped-and-raped-during-robbery-at-chuene-clinic-in-limpopo-20250110>

Companies Act. SAMA is a voluntary membership association, existing to serve the best interests and needs of its members in all healthcare-related matters.

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