

12 Joburg Clinics Closed During Municipal Strike

Written by Rudi Prinsloo
Sunday, 02 August 2009 07:21 -



Twelve primary health care clinics were closed in Johannesburg on Thursday due to intimidation of staff by striking municipal workers, the municipality said.

"The city was forced to shut 12 of its 87 primary health care clinics on Thursday, following reports of intimidation of non-striking health workers," said City of Johannesburg spokesman Nthatsi Modingoane.

Reports of intimidation of clinic staff were received from several clinics across the city, he said.

In an incident on Wednesday at the Protea Glen Clinic, nurses on duty were apparently attacked by four men armed with knobkerries and sjamboks.

The men apparently asked the staff why they were on duty when everyone else was striking.

"Two staff members, [the] clinic manager and administration clerk were sjamboked," said Modingoane.

They received treatment at another clinic and were discharged after examination.

"The assaulted staff members were extremely traumatised and the city health department had to refer them to the employee assistance programme for counselling."

A case of assault had been opened with the police.

Modingoane advised the public to visit their nearest provincial health clinics and community health centres, if their primary health care clinics were shut.

He said that while the municipality supported workers' constitutional and legal right to strike it expected their unions to ensure they respected and upheld the rights of those not on strike, in particular essential services personnel.

Strikers should refrain from any intimidation or lawlessness, said Modingoane.

"The city health department apologises to the public for any inconvenience and is doing everything humanly possible to minimise the service delivery disruption," he said.

The strike by the South African Municipal Workers' Union and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Union entered its fourth day on Thursday.

Union negotiators spent most of the day deadlocked in wage negotiations with the South African Local Government Association. A march was held in Durban.

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The Salga offer on the table includes an across-the-board 11,5 percent increase from July 1, and a 1,5 percent increase from January 1, 2010.

At the time disputes were declared with the employer, Imatu was demanding 13 percent and Samwu 15 percent.

While 125,000 Samwu members were staying away from work, most of the 70,000 Imatu members have returned to work.

Source : Sapa /ml/clh

Date : 30 Jul 2009 17:07