



HEALTH AND OTHER SERVICE PERSONNEL
TRADE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hospersa slams arrest of Free State community healthcare workers

Hospersa condemns yesterday's arrest of about 160 community healthcare workers, who had gathered outside the offices of the Free State Health Department, after various attempts to engage with the department – when they were summarily relieved of their duties – had been ignored.

Hospersa is calling upon Free State Health MEC Benny Malakoane to explain the department's actions – especially in view of the fact that the national Department of Health has identified primary healthcare as one of the main pillars upon which it will build a refocused health sector that incorporates a National Health Insurance.

“It's a sad irony that while community healthcare workers are being charged under Section 12 of the Constitution, for an illegal gathering – these workers play a vital role in healthcare at grassroots level in a province where health services at hospitals and clinics have collapsed, and citizens are being denied their right to health care, enshrined in Section 27 of our Constitution,” said Hospersa General Secretary Noel Desfontaines.

Hospersa would like to emphasise that the gathering, which involved many elderly women, was entirely peaceful and their subsequent arrest and incarceration by government demonstrates an alarming level of intolerance by the state, for people who are merely exercising their right to speak out against the mismanagement of health resources that belong to the people of this land.

Hospersa supports the efforts of Section 27 and Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) activists to secure the release of these workers as well as any efforts to compel the department to reinstate them to their original positions. (ends)

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