



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

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DEATH OF INMATE MPHONG KHUMBENI AT MANGAUNG CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) confirms the unnatural death of inmate Mpho Mkhumbeni at the Mangaung Correctional Centre (MCC), which is operated by the private contractor G4S. Inmate Mkhumbeni was serving a life sentence for a murder conviction handed down on 4 November 2014. He was admitted to MCC on 28 November 2014.

DCS was formally notified by the contractor of the death of an inmate on 12 March 2025. The said inmate was reported to have collapsed in his cell and rushed to the internal hospital. However, conflicting accounts soon emerged from further reports requested by the Department from the contractor and its employees, thus prompting DCS to launch a full scale investigation into the matter. The investigation commenced on 14 March 2025 and is currently at an advanced stage.

At this stage, the following has been established:

The contractor arranged and conducted a search exercise on 11 March 2025 without informing the Temporary Manager, an appointee of the Department of Correctional Services, who ought to have been part of the search operation.

On 12 March 2025, inmate Mpho Mkhumbeni was rushed to the facility's hospital and was declared dead on arrival by the attending medical doctor. This incident occurred after a cell search conducted at Wolds Unit, Street 1, Cell 6, earlier in the evening of 11 March 2025 by G4S personnel, known as Dedicated Search Team (DST).

The investigation further uncovered that the DST officials returned to the Wolds Unit, Street 1, Cell 6 later that same evening after one of them misplaced a backpack containing R800. During this return visit, the four inmates in the cell were interrogated, allegedly assaulted, and tortured over the missing money. These claims were initially denied by the DST officials and the contractor.

The Department's investigation also confirmed that the events of 11 and 12 March 2025 are connected. A sanctioned post-mortem examination concluded that inmate Mkhumbeni's death was unnatural, caused by complications from pepper spray exposure and blunt force trauma, resulting in a formal classification of the case as murder.

Following the above finding, an inquest case (253/03/2025) initially opened by the South African Police Service on 12 March 2025, was subsequently converted into a murder case (637/03/2025).

While G4S had begun suspending the officials involved, managers remained in active operations. This prompted the Temporary Manager to take deliberate and bold steps, advising the Controller to exercise his authority by withdrawing the operational certificate of Derrick de Klerk (Director Operations).

The list of other suspended officials includes:

- Ms. Anneke La Grange (Manager of Operations)
- Ms. Ida Malangabe (Security Supervisor)
- Mr. Mojalefa Petrus Maarman (DST Official)
- Mr. Boitumelo Mooi (DST Official)
- Mr. Cedric Motshabi (DST Official)
- Mr. Lebogang Martins (DST Official)
- Mr Mosioua Tanyane (DST Official)

The investigation moved further to confirm the contractor's failure to adhere to its obligations under the Concession Contract. In essence, senior managers, who were required to provide oversight during and after the search, failed to intervene or report the assault. Their claims of not witnessing the incident have been found to lack credibility. Even more concerning, G4S and its employees sought to conceal the truth and obscure the investigation. This is viewed in a serious light as it is tantamount to defeating the ends of justice.

The information shared today is based on the Department's own investigation, as it remains active, and any further developments will be communicated in due course. This transparency is necessary to ensure accountability and to clarify the circumstances surrounding inmate Mpho Mkhumbeni's death.

The Temporary Manager continues to play a crucial role in assisting the Department in monitoring operations of the Contractor and bring to the fore some of the activities that require attention and pursuance.

This incident underscores the Department's standing concerns about the management of Mangaung Correctional Centre. As a matter of record, Correctional Services is currently engaged in legal proceedings concerning the termination of the contract with Bloemfontein Correctional Contracts, and this latest development lends weight to the Department's position in taking over the facility.

ENDS

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