



MEDIA STATEMENT

14 July 2021

South Africa Pharmacy Council distraught at the looting of pharmacies, destruction of health care services and livelihoods

The regulator of pharmacy in South Africa, the South African Pharmacy Council, is both distraught and disappointed at the looting sprees that have targeted pharmacies, amongst other establishments, in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. As at Wednesday, 14 July 2021, we have received reports from pharmacists and pharmacy associations that, in both provinces, more than 90 pharmacies have been destroyed and looted beyond revival, with KwaZulu-Natal being the hardest hit.

Among the looted items are COVID-19 vaccines and scheduled medicines, which when used without proper pharmacist counselling on storage and dosage may result in harm to one's health. As such, we urge those who looted these medicines and health products to not use them or give to other persons but rather return them to their nearest pharmacy for proper disposal. We also caution members of the public to only source medicines from legitimate health establishments such as pharmacies.

We are worried at the loss of pharmaceutical care that the affected areas will experience as a result of the temporary and, in most cases, prolonged closures of pharmacies as most of the pharmacies that are affected are independently owned. We are further disappointed at the possible loss of employment and livelihoods for pharmacists and support personnel employed by the affected pharmacies.

We call on South Africans to refrain from destructing healthcare infrastructure or disrupting health care services for any reason. Such actions reverse the difficult gains we have made in increasing the accessibility of health care services to previously underserved communities in our country. It also puts the lives of citizens in these communities at risk.

Issued by Mr Vincent Tlala, Registrar/CEO of the South African Pharmacy Council

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MEDIA SPOKESPEOPLE FOR THE SAPC:

Mr Mogologolo Phasha (President of Council)
Mr Vincent Tlala (Registrar/CEO)

For media enquiries or to request an interview with SAPC spokespeople, please email CommMedia@sapc.za.org or, alternatively, contact Madimetja Mashishi (Manager: Communication and Media) on 073 821 5994 / 012 310 8551 **OR** Natalie Urban (Practitioner: Communication and Media) on 012 319 8554 / 082 656 2348.