



**KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE**

**EDUCATION**  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **Media Alert**

To All News Editors

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Tuesday, 18 January 2022

### **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION CONFIRMS DELAY IN SCHOOLS REOPENING IN UMKHAMBATHINI DUE TO THREATS**

The MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr Kwazi Mshengu has this morning visited the area of uMkhambathini to assess the education system's readiness ahead of schools reopening scheduled for tomorrow, 19 January 2022.

This visit follows after certain members of the community have threatened to prevent educators and learners from gaining access to the schools when the schools reopen. The modus operandi is that in all 11 schools, the gates were locked with heavy chains and padlocks, and whenever principals and educators tried to break the chains to gain access, they would receive random anonymous phone calls threatening their lives. This has already been reported to the police.

According to local government authorities, there is an ongoing legal dispute in the local traditional leadership that is already in court. What is frustrating is that the dispute has nothing to do with education and yet some community members have chosen to use schools as a soft target and a bargaining tool.

Upon considering safety of all, we have decided to delay reopening of 11 affected schools that fall under the uMkhambathi Circuit, UMgungundlovu District by only one day.

The Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal appreciates that communities are free to engage in protest action, but cannot intimidate and prevent learners from going to school.

For the safety of educators, learners, & all education officials, and for the education system to proceed smoothly, we have activated our sister Department of Community Safety and Liaison to try and mitigate the situation.

All 11 schools are expected to resume teaching and learning by Thursday, 20 January 2022.

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**ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

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Issued by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

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