

# Deaths in Cecilia Makiwane Hospital

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Created 2006/05/28 - 12:00am

28 May, 2006 - 00:00 ? moderator

## Contents

- Joint statement by the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS) and the TAC on the death of four babies at Cecilia Makiwane Hospital
- Reminder: March for Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care: 30 May 2006

Also:

- The latest issue of TAC's magazine, **Equal Treatment** (Issue 20, June 2006), is available for [download](#) (approximately 3.8 megabytes PDF file). This issue's focus is women and HIV. Mailing will begin later this week. To get a hard copy, email your name and postal address to [et@tac.org.za](mailto:et@tac.org.za). If you have already sent your address previously and do not receive Equal Treatment by 25 June, please let us know.
- The **TAC website** ([www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za)) has been (and continues to be) revamped. Bad links on the archived newsletter pages have been fixed. Please refresh your browser to ensure you see the new changes. Apologies for the previous poor state of the website. If you notice a problem on the website, please notify us by emailing [info@tac.org.za](mailto:info@tac.org.za).

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## **Joint statement by the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security and the Treatment Action Campaign on the death of four babies at Cecilia Makiwane Hospital**

On Saturday 20 May 2006, four new-born babies died due to a power failure in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Cecilia Makiwane, a hospital in East London, Eastern Cape Province. The hospital is one of the oldest in the province.

Several reports have described the dire state of the hospital, with little action from hospital management to address its

problems. There is a human resources crisis with severe shortages of doctors, nurses and specialists. The hospital also has outdated equipment. A 2002 report by MINMEC identified various problems, which have not been fixed. A further audit in 2005 also identified the same problems.

By law, all hospitals, especially ICUs, must have a backup source of energy so that if the power supply fails, it does not lead to unnecessary deaths of patients in need of constant life-support.

It has been reported that the babies were in incubators and that when a problem was recognised by the nurses, parents were called to the hospital. Thirty minutes after arrival, the parents were called to ICU and told by nurses to do anything they can to keep their babies warm. The parents say that they were not informed that a power-failure had occurred and that the hospital did not have a backup plan. The first baby died at 3pm and the last one at 8pm.

Hospital CEO Mr Vuyo Musani and Provincial MEC Jajula have refused to comment thus far. When the families asked about autopsies to establish cause of death, they were told to pay R 55.

We urge the Hospital to:

- Ensure that autopsies are performed and that the families get the results for free.
- Launch an external investigation to establish that no other lives were lost due to power failures as a result of Saturday's incident.
- Immediately sort out the generator problems to ensure that no more lives are lost due to failed backup power supply problems.

To the Provincial MEC for health, we ask that she:

- Gives direct supervision to the hospital to ensure that its problems are resolved, especially the human resources shortages, and communicates this to the public.
- Ensures that a Provincial Human Resource Plan, with concrete proposals for recruitment and retention of health care staff, is developed urgently.
- Develop and implement a Hospital Revitalisation Plan to ensure quality health care access to the people of the Eastern Cape

The TAC Eastern Cape Office is organising various actions to highlight the problems of Cecilia Makiwane Hospital.

For further information contact:

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*(Sources: Daily Dispatch, communication with hospital users)*

[END OF HOSPITAL DEATHS STATEMENT]

## **Reminder: March to UN offices and Union buildings in Pretoria on Tuesday 30 May 2006**

- HIV: Demand Truth and leadership to save lives.
- Be Counted! Help stop 1500 new HIV infections and 900 AIDS deaths everyday. AIDS is still a crisis.
- Call for countrywide access to HIV Prevention, ARV treatment and decent care.
- Africa says: ?80% access to prevention, care and treatment by 2010? - Support the Abuja call of May 2006.
- Date: 30 May 2006; Time: 12pm; Venue: Church Square, Pretoria.

Click [here](#) for full statement.

[END OF REMINDER FOR MARCH ON 30 MAY]

- [Treatment Plan](#)
- [Treatment Plan](#)