

## **DURBAN August 23 Sapa NURSING COUNCIL CRITICISES BEHAVIOUR OF STRIKERS**

Many nurses wanted to work but were severely intimidated by people who wanted a total shutdown of health services during the strike, the South African Nursing Council (SANC) said on Monday.

"We are aware that there are dedicated nurses who want to continue providing services in hospitals but are prevented from doing so," said SANC chairwoman, Nonhlanhla Makhanya.

addressing the media in Durban.

Makhanya, who was speaking at a media briefing in Durban, called on

government to assure safety of the nurses so that they could go back to work.

The SANC is a statutory body mandated to serve and protect the public on matters relating to health services generally and nurses in particular.

Makhanya said it was sad that people were unable to use public health institutions because of intimidation.

"We would like to remind the whole nursing fraternity that their right to strike does not supersede their professional and ethical responsibility to be of service to the consumers of healthcare," she said.

She commended the court interdict obtained by the central government, saying that it would help to deal with intimidation.

The KwaZulu-Natal government has also obtained an interdict preventing striking workers from barricading public institutions.

Scores of police officers were deployed in Durban hospitals on

Monday morning to prevent the barricading of hospital gates.

Makhanya said the council had powers to take actions against nurses who disrupted services in health institutions.

"If the nurse is found guilty of misconduct, he or she can either be fined, given a warning or removed from the nurses roll."

The Congress of SA Trade Unions and the Independent Labour Caucus announced a nationwide strike about a week ago after rejecting the government's offer of a seven percent salary increase and a R700 a month housing allowance.

They were demanding an 8.6 percent increase and R1000 housing allowance.