
Questions to follow collapse of hospital roof

THE DA said yesterday it would be asking questions in the Gauteng Legislature about the roof collapse at Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital in Parktown.

Five people were injured when the roof collapsed on Thursday.

"I will be asking questions in the Gauteng Legislature about the appointment of the contractor involved in the roof repair where the collapse happened," said Jack Bloom, a DA Gauteng MPL.

"We need to know what measures were taken to ensure this contractor was competent to do the job as negligence has been blamed as a contributing factor in the collapse.

"Or was the contractor not qualified to do the job and appointed on fishy grounds?"

Bloom said a structural engineering assessment had to be done urgently into other areas of the hospital that may be in danger of collapse.

"This part of the hospital is normally very busy, with thousands of patients passing there every day, so the casualties could have been much higher.

"An independent investigation is now needed into the causes of the collapse," Bloom said.

The roof collapsed while private construction workers were filling in a leaking section on Thursday.

"There was a report in 2012 that warned about structural problems in the building and staff have complained for years about roofs that leak water and sewage," said Bloom.

"In March last year, I identified various problem areas in the hospital that needed urgent repair.

Last week the hospital's Poly 3 dental clinic had to be evacuated because parts of the ceiling collapsed."

He said that the staff and patients of the hospital needed to be assured that all

parts of the hospital were safe and that problem areas were attended to as soon as possible.

"I am hugely relieved that there were no deaths from yesterday's collapse of part of the roof at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Hospital, and I wish the five injured people a speedy recovery," said Bloom.

Gauteng Premier David Makhura, MEC for Health Gwen Ramokgopa, Health Minister Dr Aaron Motsoaledi and officials from the Public Works Department visited the hospital soon after the roof collapsed and set into motion a clean-up operation and an investigation into the matter. The contractor, who was working on the roof, was immediately removed from the site.

The DA MPL said he welcomed the removal of the contractor from building work on the hospital, but said the blame had to be extended to whoever appointed the company.

"Maintenance at hospitals should be taken away from the incompetent Gauteng Infrastructure Development Department and given to hospital management."

"All relevant facts must be made public and there must be accountability for this terrible tragedy that should serve as a wake-up call to give a far higher priority to maintenance and repair of our hospitals." – ANA