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WARD COUNCILLOR ON BAIL AFTER ALLEGED SHOOTING

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An Msunduzi Municipality ward councillor Douglas Roberts (50) appeared at the Pietermaritzburg Magistrate's court yesterday, charged with attempted murder, crimen injuria and intimidation after allegedly firing a gun at a man who was urinating in his neighbour's yard last Friday evening.

Thabani Khumalo (35) opened a case against the councillor at the Alexandra Police Station on Friday.

Both Roberts and Khumalo appeared in separate courts at the Pietermaritzburg Magistrate's court yesterday. Roberts' wife counter-charged Khumalo with common assault for allegedly striking her with a brick. Khumalo made a brief appearance and his matter adjourned for further investigations to March 24.

In Roberts' case, and according to the charge sheet presented in court, the State says he "unlawfully and intentionally" attempted to kill Khumalo by shooting at him.

Under his crimen injuria charge, the state says Roberts unlawfully and intentionally "injured, insulted and impaired the dignity of Khumalo by abusing him with racist insults.

Roberts was released on R1 500 bail over the weekend and his case was adjourned for further investigations to May 6.

The DA's provincial chairperson Dean Macpherson, said the party was aware that "an unproven allegation has been made" against a DA councillor in Msunduzi but "no evidence has been produced as yet".

"It is an allegation that has been made at this point, of which it is also alleged that the councillor's wife was attacked with a rock by the neighbour in question. [No evidence has yet] been produced that a gunshot was fired," said Macpherson.

Macpherson added that the party would not suspend the councillor pending investigations unless "credible, factual evidence was placed before the court or the party".

"We cannot and will not work on allegations alone, especially after his wife sustained an injury from the alleged attack," said Macpherson.

Msunduzi Municipality's council Speaker Eunice Majola said that the council was aware of this incident.

"The [man] is still accused. For us to be able to investigate the case we need something formal."

"If he is found to have done this, we have a council committee that will apply council's code of conduct. It will then be discussed at a full council meeting, and the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (Cogta) would also be involved," said Majola.