MEDIA STATEMENT FROM THE DIRECTORATE FOR PRIORITY CRIME INVESTIGATION (HAWKS) - SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE

TO: ALL MEDIA

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HAWKS ARREST ALLEGED TERROR SUSPECTS

PRETORIA - At least four individuals, aged between 20 and 24 years, suspected of working in terrorism related activities in Gauteng have been arrested in a joint operation by the Hawks, National Intervention Unit, Bomb Squad and other law enforcement agencies.

The anti-terror raids took place in Newclare and Azaadville, Johannesburg.

The arrests follow protracted investigations by the Hawks and the State Security of possible terror related activities in the Johannesburg area. Four suspects were identified after they attempted to travel to Syria in 2015. They were however refused by an international airline to travel after they were informed of their intentions.

On Saturday (2016/07/09), members of the Hawks swooped on their locations, where several items were seized for analysis.

The National Head of the Hawks Lieutenant General Mthandazo Ntlemeza said South Africa cannot sit on its laurels because this kind of threats are likely.

"It is clear that the arrest of the four is very big step forward in the fight against terrorism. But we cannot say that the problem has been solved. This terrorist organisations are recruiting in our country and as the law enforcement agencies will continue to work around the clock to prevent any form of recruitment on our soil. We will remain on high alert to make sure that we safeguard our citizenry and residents alike. We will diffuse any attempts to form any terrorist groups in our country. Our people should also be vigilant and report any suspicious activities to the police," said Ntlemeza.

Meanwhile two of the suspects will appear at the Johannesburg Magistrate Court on Monday facing terrorist related charges while the remaining suspects will appear at Kagiso Magistrate Court on firearms and explosives related charges the same day.

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