



August 18, 2024

Public Statement from the Bulungula Incubator Board of Directors: Réjane Woodroffe and Dave Martin Safe After Armed Robbery Incident

Nqileni Village, Eastern Cape – On Wednesday night, 14 August 2024, Dave Martin and Réjane Woodroffe, co-founders of the Bulungula Incubator, were attacked by four armed men who broke into their home in Nqileni Village. While this has been a challenging experience, we want to reassure everyone that both Réjane and Dave are safe, receiving the care they need, and are on the road to recovery.

We acknowledge that there have been various accounts, photos, and videos circulating about the incident. To provide clarity, here is an account of what occurred:

Four armed men ambushed Dave as he returned home from work. The intruders ransacked their residence and assaulted Dave and Réjane before proceeding to the Bulungula Incubator offices, where our night guard, Sonwabile Timo Futu, was also tied up as the men robbed the BI main office. The assailants fled the village with Dave and Réjane in a BI vehicle.

Sonwabile managed to escape and raise the alarm, and the local community responded rapidly and decisively, quickly blocking roads and coordinating a search. Thanks to the swift actions of the community, the attackers were forced to abandon the vehicle and flee on foot. Dave and Réjane were found safely and immediately taken to Madwaleni Hospital, where they received excellent care. Both sustained injuries, including bruising and head wounds. Dave also suffered broken ribs and a punctured lung. Despite these injuries, they have now returned home and are resting. Sonwabile thankfully is unhurt.

This incident, while distressing, is an unusual occurrence in what is typically a peaceful and beautiful part of the country. The perpetrators appear to be a single group involved in a few similar incidents in the area. Thanks to the resilience and quick action of the community, the situation was resolved safely. The Bulungula community, hospital staff, and local police have demonstrated remarkable care and commitment throughout this ordeal. The police investigation is ongoing.

While Dave and Réjane take time out to rest and heal, the Bulungula Incubator team and Board of Directors are fully equipped and committed to keeping our important work and all projects running smoothly. We are more determined than ever to continue our efforts to address the systemic injustices that contribute to criminal behaviour of this nature.

Bulungula Incubator is a Not-For-Profit Association

Our vision is to be an innovative agent in the creation of vibrant, sustainable rural communities

P.O. Box 43 Mqanduli, 5080 | Tel: 047 577 8908

www.bulungulaincubator.org | email: info@bulungulaincubator.org

Department of Social Development reference no: 057-666 | SARS PBO no: 930029899

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has offered support during this difficult time. The outpouring of love, solidarity, and action from our community, the Bulungula Incubator staff, the greater Wild Coast region, friends near and far, and the medical teams at Madwaleni Hospital has been incredible. We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped us through this.

This event underscores the strength and unity within the community and reinforces our collective determination to build a brighter future together. We recognize that healing from this experience will take time, and we are committed to supporting our staff and community through this process.

Any love, questions, comments, or queries can be sent to info@bulungulaincubator.org. Our team will monitor incoming messages and channel them to the appropriate people.

Please see below a message from Réjane.

With thanks and gratitude, the Bulungula Incubator Board of Directors

Message from Réjane Woodroffe, Director of the Bulungula Incubator

The experience was undoubtedly difficult, but we are incredibly grateful to have come through it safely. While we are physically recovering, our spirits remain strong. It saddens us deeply to think of the young men involved—intelligent individuals who, due to the harsh socioeconomic conditions in our country, see no other path but crime. While their actions were violent, we do not see them as bad or evil people. Instead, we recognise the systemic issues that drive such behaviour and are committed to continuing our work to address these underlying problems.

The response from our community has been overwhelming. From the moment we were found, we were surrounded by love, support and care—from the excellent medical attention at Madwaleni Hospital to the swift actions of our community members and the unwavering support from our friends and partners. We feel incredibly blessed to be part of a community that responds with such unity and compassion.

To everyone connected to the Bulungula Incubator and Lodge, we want you to know that this experience only strengthens our commitment to our mission. We remain dedicated to building a joyful and cohesive community and country where everyone can live a thriving life. Our work is more important than ever, and while we take some time to rest and recover, we have a capable and competent team and Board to ensure the continued operation of our organisation.

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