

Death of second detainee denied

By a Staff Reporter

POLICE HEADQUARTERS in Pretoria this afternoon denied that Mohammed Essop, the 21-year-old detainee had died this morning while in custody following a nation-wide swoop by the Security Police at the week-end.

In a statement issued at 2 p.m. Lieutenant General T. J. Crous, said: "The detainee, Essop, who had been treated at the H. F. Verwoerd Hospital, has now been transferred to the Prison Hospital where he will be detained until his discharge by the Medical Officer. In view of the serious nature of the matter now being investigated by the Security Police with which Essop is alleged and suspected to be connected, he will not be allowed to receive visitors."

A H. F. Verwoerd Hospital spokesman later confirmed that Mr Essop had been discharged and said that he had been instructed not to divulge the nature of his illness.

Yesterday Mr Essop, a 21-year-old student at the University of the Witwatersrand, was reported by his mother to be "very seriously ill" at the H. F. Verwoerd Hospital. Mr Essop's brother is also reported to have said that Mr Essop was "in perfect health" when he was taken away by the Security Police on Sunday. A senior hospital spokesman told The Pretoria News this morning: "Essop's condition is fair — and that is all I'm allowed to say."

A reporter and photographer were turned away from the ward in which Mr Essop was supposed to be a patient. Another hospital spokesman refused to say when or why the student was admitted.

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Yesterday Mr Essop's parents rushed to Pretoria from their Roodepoort home after hearing rumours that their son was either dead or seriously ill. His mother is reported to have told a journal-

ist that her son was "unconscious and his breathing very slow."

Meanwhile, an official veil of mystery surrounds the death of another detainee, Mr Ahmed Timol, a 30-year-old Indian teacher who is said to have plunged to his death from the 10th floor of Johannesburg Police Headquarters at John Vorster Square. Wire the Minister of Justice, Mr Pelsler, was asked whether there would be an inquiry into Mr Timol's alleged suicide leap, his only reply through his private secretary was "no comment."

Any comment, The Pretoria News was told, would have to be made by the Prime Minister, Mr Vorster, who is acting Minister of Police in the absence overseas of Mr Lourens Muller. The Prime Minister's private secretary said that Mr Vorster might have something to say, but up to lunch time he had made no comment.

The Commissioner of Police, General G. J. Joubert, and head of the Security Police, General P. J. Venier were said by high-ranking staff officers at headquarters to be "out of reach of the Press," for the rest of the week. Brigadier P. Kruger who was reported to have said yesterday of Timol's death: "It is true. He jumped from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square. He committed suicide" was not available for further comment today.

Mr Timol's death brings to 14 the number of people who have died while detained by the Security Police. Last week

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