Beat: Miscellaneous

`Killer bees` attack special needs school in South Africa, injuring 64

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USPA News - More than 60 young children were injured Wednesday when a swarm of Africanized honey bees, better known as killer bees, invaded a school near the South African city of Cape Town, paramedics said. Four children were critically injured.

The freak incident happened at around 10 a.m. local time on Wednesday when a swarm of bees appeared at a school for children with special needs in Bellville, a city which is part of the greater Cape Town metropolitan area in the southwestern region of South Africa. All of the children are between the ages of 5 and 10. "Reports indicate that the children were at a school for special needs when the swarm of bees went on a rampage, stinging everything in their way," said Chris Botha, a spokesman for ambulance service Netcare 911. Paramedics and provincial emergency services were quick to arrive at the scene. Botha said a total of 61 children and three teachers were stung by the bees. "Thirty-five people were treated on scene by nursing staff while twenty-six children were treated by paramedics before they were transported to nearby hospitals for the care that they required," the spokesman said, adding that four of the children were in a critical condition. It was not immediately clear what may have provoked the swarm to attack the school. Botha, who is also a part-time beekeeper, said the incident involved Africanized honey bees, known for relentlessly attacking and chasing perceived threats in large numbers. This has earned them the nickname "killer bees" even though their venom is no more potent than that of other bees. Wednesday`s incident follows another bee attack in South Africa earlier this month. Forty-four children between the ages of 2 and 6 were injured on March 8 when they were attacked by a swarm of bees while waiting for their bus after visiting a bunny park in Benoni, a city on the East Rand in Gauteng province. That incident did not involve killer bees.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com