Swazi Lawmaker Apologizes for Suggesting People With HIV Be “Branded”

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Timothy Myeni, a Swazi member of parliament who allegedly suggested that people living with HIV should be branded on the buttocks, said the media misquoted him and he apologized to positive people for any damage caused by the statement, Agence France-Presse reports.

“I want to disassociate myself from the statement that has been doing rounds in the media saying I suggested that people with HIV should be branded,” Myeni said. He made the comment at an HIV workshop last week.

“I posed a question to the workshop facilitator, saying maybe those who have been found with the virus must have a mark so that they can get quick medical attention,” Myeni explained. He retracted his question shortly after workshop participants rejected it.

The comments were highly publicized and sparked uproar in Swaziland. South African lobby group Treatment Action Campaign plans to assist Swaziland in providing correct HIV/AIDS information to clear up any misconceptions.

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