

## **Court a health hazard, say staff**

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Court a health hazard, say staff News / 3 July 2019, 10:00pm / Ncamisile Mkhize STAFF protested outside the Pinetown Magistrate's Court yesterday over the unhygienic working environment in the building. Bongani Mbatha African News Agency (ANA)Durban - Staff who were aggrieved about unhygienic working conditions protested outside the Pinetown Magistrate's Court yesterday. The staff said they had numerous problems with health hazards in the building that they had raised with management several times, but which had not yet been addressed. The Public Service Association's (PSA) KwaZulu-Natal manager, Claude Naiker, said an entire wing in the court was not safe to work in. "A report that was undertaken in 2009 by the Department of Public Works indicated that a section of the building was in need of dire repairs, but to date it has not been repaired," said Naiker. He said both the departments of Justice and Public Works had indicated that they had no budget to repair the building. "If there is no urgent solution by today, the PSA will ask its members not to report for duty because the entire building is not safe," he said. He added that a rat infestation was among the problems that had been raised. "SAPS members have had their lunch eaten by rats, prosecutors have found partially eaten paper and foodstuffs in their offices, magistrates have also noted rats running around in court," he said. There was also no toilet paper in the toilets and members of the public had resorted to using newspaper. He said the holding cells for the accused were also filthy. "There is a nasty smell emanating from the prisoners' cells, it is clear that the places have not been cleaned for a while," he said. He added that some legal aid attorneys were not using the cells to consult as the conditions were dire. "The poor holding facilities are also affecting the prisoners; this is a health risk to them. The smells are also encroaching into the courts, affecting all role-players as well, and this is posing a health risk to members of the National Prosecution Authority's staff," he said. Naiker said the court was in serious need of maintenance and cleaning. The Department of Justice said it would be able to comment on the matter today. The Mercury.