

Cops will face 'pressure' when 19,000 prisoners are granted parole: union

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Cops will face 'pressure' when 19,000 prisoners are granted parole: union By Naledi Shange - 13 May 2020 - 17:38 Saps is failing in its duty to ensure a safe working environment for its officers, the Public Servants Association (PSA) said on Wednesday. Image: File The Public Servants Association (PSA) said on Wednesday it was worried about a shortage of police officers, saying officers may face immense pressure with the upcoming release of up to 19,000 prisoners. The inmates could be released to ease congestion behind bars as the department of correctional services tries to limit the spread of the coronavirus. "The availability of sufficient manpower is not negotiable, and this need is set to increase with the recent announcement made by President Cyril Ramaphosa that almost 19,000 inmates who committed 'petty' crimes would be released on parole," said the union for public sector workers. Just under 19,000 inmates out of a population of 155,000 will be placed on parole as a measure to combat the spread of Covid-19 in correctional ... News 5 days ago "Without any proof of rehabilitation, they may return to crime with more serious offences resulting from their interaction with hardened criminals, thereby creating more pressure on existing members," added the union. The association said it was also concerned by the number of police officers who were contracting the virus. Last week, police minister Bheki Cele said at least 253 police officers had tested positive. Cele said various measures, including the daily screening of police officers, had been put in place. The association, however, said not enough was being done and called on the minister and the national police commissioner to do more, "The PSA represents thousands of employees and is of the view that Saps is failing in its duty to ensure a safe working environment for its employees and not taking proactive steps to reduce the risk to police officers," it said. "SAPS must endeavour to screen and test members on an ongoing basis when reporting in the morning and when knocking off after their shift [and ensure the] provision of surgical masks [and] mandatory screening by the department of health to include off-duty members. "Some members have already raised concerns, regarding the limited availability of tools for testing and screening." It called for SAPS to collaborate with the department of defence's medical health service. The correctional services department has recorded 15 new Covid-19 cases. News 2 days ago Nearly 100 inmates have tested positive for Covid-19 in the East London prison - more than doubling the number of infected prisoners in the Eastern