

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Durban Westville Correctional Facility on brink of disaster: PSA demands urgent government intervention**

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**EMBARGO**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the imminent security crisis unfolding at Durban Westville Correctional Facility in KwaZulu-Natal, where a collapse in food services has created a volatile environment.

The PSA has received distressing reports from the Union's members, detailing a severe operational failure that, if not addressed immediately, could lead to riots in the facility. At the heart of the crisis is the complete dysfunction of the facility's kitchen, which has rendered the institution unable to prepare meals on-site. The steam system has failed, most electrical cooking pots are broken, and critical food-supply chains have been disrupted. These factors have resulted in severe delays in meal preparation and distribution. The delivery of essential food items, including bread, has become erratic and unreliable. Frustrated inmates are now threatening correctional officers, raising serious concerns about the facility's ability to maintain order and security.

Despite repeated attempts by correctional officers and inmates to engage management on these pressing issues, their concerns have been ignored, and no urgent action has been taken. This blatant negligence and failure to provide necessities have fuelled tensions, pushing the facility to the brink of a full-scale crisis that could spiral out of control.

This crisis at Durban Westville Correctional Facility is not an isolated incident and reflects broader systemic failures in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS). Chronic underfunding, mismanagement, poor maintenance of facilities, and bureaucratic inefficiencies are defining features of South Africa's correctional system. The PSA has repeatedly warned against the deteriorating conditions in correctional facilities across the country, but these concerns have been ignored.

The failure to provide inmates with basic nutrition and humane living conditions is a serious violation of human rights and a failure of governance. If the DCS does not take immediate action, it will be responsible for the outbreak of violence and associated safety risks.

The PSA strongly condemns the gross mismanagement, incompetence, and failure of leadership that have resulted in this avoidable crisis. The PSA demands immediate and decisive intervention, including urgent repairs to the prison's kitchen facilities to ensure that on-site meal preparation resumes without further delay. Food-supply chains must be stabilised immediately to prevent further shortages and ensure consistent delivery of essential food items.

The PSA also demands deployment of emergency security measures to protect correctional officers from escalating threats. The PSA also calls for direct intervention by the Minister of Correctional Services to provide long-term solutions and prevent similar crises at other correctional facilities.

The PSA will not allow the Union's members and inmates suffer owing to administrative incompetence and neglect. Should the DCS fail to take swift corrective action, the PSA will escalate this matter to national leadership, legal authorities, and human rights organisations to hold those responsible accountable. Government cannot continue to ignore the collapse of critical infrastructure in correctional facilities. Urgent decisive action is required to prevent a disaster that could have far-reaching consequences for the entire correctional system.

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