



MEDIA RELEASE Gender-Based Violence Command Centre: PSA urges Department of Social Development to resolve technical problems

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about ongoing technical problems at the Department of Social Development's Gender-Based Violence Command Centre (GBVCC) that are laming service delivery.

The GBVCC is tasked to provide a 24-hour service to victims of gender-based violence and femicide in South Africa. Service delivery has, however, been impaired since mid-June 2024 by network problems, service unavailability, and a non-functional call centre toll-free number.

The PSA engaged the Department to resolve these matters but has not received feedback on progress. It is further disturbing that the Department has not issued a statement to inform the public and announce an alternative, despite the matter being a social-media topic. At the Presidential Summit Against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in 2018 and 2022, the President assured citizens that there would be a comprehensive national response on gender-based violence. This can, however, not be achieved if the first option and immediate help for victims has not been accessible for more than two months. The PSA was informed that calls are being diverted to other social service providers instead of being managed by relevant Social Workers of the Department of Social Development.

The Department has not paid the service provider, *Brilliantel Company*, for more than three months, which resulted in the service being terminated. Victims cannot be left unassisted because the Department and the service provider cannot find common ground. The President has declared gender-based violence as a second pandemic in South Africa and it should be treated as such.

The PSA is further aware that the negative impact of the situation on Social Workers at the GBVCC. The PSA therefore demanded to meet with the Department, employees of the GBVCC and its management. The PSA also appeals to the Presidency and National Treasury intervene and resolve this pressing matter.

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