

MEDIA RELEASE

PSA applauds temporary closure of non-compliant Ulundi government complex in KwaZulu-Natal

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EMBARGO

None

ENQUIRIES

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) applauds the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Public Works and Infrastructure and the acting Head of Department for the swift and decisive action in temporarily closing the Ulundi Government Complex owing to non-compliance with occupational health and safety (OHS) standards.

This critical intervention follows the PSA's severe concerns regarding hazardous working conditions faced by public servants in the complex. Following numerous employee complaints, the PSA conducted an *in-loco* inspection and confirmed severe structural and safety risks, including extensive water leaks, resulting in damp and unsafe working conditions. There are electrical hazards, with waterlogged wiring, posing a high risk of electrocution and fire. Collapsing furniture and waterlogged carpets, render the environment uninhabitable. Serious health risks, such as mould growth and poor air quality, endanger employees' well-being.

Despite these dangers, employees were still instructed to report for duty. The PSA opposed this reckless directive and demanded immediate action, leading to the temporary closure of the building to prevent further harm to employees. The PSA commends MEC and acting HOD for their leadership in enforcing OHS compliance and prioritising the health and safety of government employees. Their commitment ensures that public servants are working in safe and suitable conditions, which is a responsibility that should never be taken lightly.

The PSA, however, underscores that the temporary closure is a short-term solution. The PSA urges the MEC for Finance to allocate an urgent budget for the full renovation of the Ulundi Government Complex. As a critical administrative hub, its long-term neglect threatens the safety of employees and undermines service delivery in the province.

The PSA will closely monitor progress on remedial actions and engage with relevant authorities to ensure comprehensive structural assessments and full renovations are completed without delay. A clear timeline for the safe occupation of the building must be provided. Strict OHS compliance must be enforced before employees return to work. Should there be any delays or failure to allocate necessary funds, the PSA will escalate the matter through legal enforcement mechanisms to ensure accountability. The PSA is committed to defending the rights and ensuring the health and safety of public servants and will not allow government negligence to put employees' health and safety at risk.

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