MEDIA RELEASE   **PSA calls for closure of Durban Magistrates Court owing to health and safety concerns**

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EMBARGO   None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by appalling infrastructure conditions at the Durban Magistrates Court in KwaZulu-Natal.

Despite being condemned on 23 January 2023 owing to various defects and health hazards, the Court remains operational, putting the lives of employees and clients at risk. The PSA therefore demands that the Department of Employment and Labour takes strict action against the Department for the non-adherence to health and safety standards. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development must provide alternative accommodation for employees. The Departments of Justice and Constitutional Development and Public Works must take responsibility for this negligence and ensure a safe working environment as required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Employers have a legal obligation to provide a safe working environment, as evident in case law that have found that employers have a duty to ensure that their employees work in a safe and healthy environment and must take reasonable care to prevent harm. Additionally, employers are liable for harm or damage caused to their employees owing to failure to comply with health and safety regulations. Employers must also provide adequate training on health and safety procedures and ensure that employees are equipped to perform duties safely.

The PSA demands that the Departments of Justice and Constitutional Development and Public Works take immediate action to repair and replace faulty lifts, ensure a reliable water supply, address electrical and fire safety hazards and provide adequate ventilation and sanitation facilities.

The PSA will not tolerate employees being subjected to such deplorable conditions and urges the Ministers of Justice and Constitutional Development and Public Works to take decisive action for the sake of the health and safety of employees and members of the public.

END