

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      PSA calls for emergency provincial action as unpaid bills plunge KwaZulu-Natal health and education facilities into water crisis

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**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                              communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) strongly condemns the recent disconnection of water services at key KwaZulu-Natal government facilities owing to unpaid water and electricity bills.

These water cuts were implemented by Msunduzi Municipality at the Department of Health's Natalia headquarters owing to an unpaid bill of R6.9 million by Grey's Hospital. The Department of Basic Education's head office in Pietermaritzburg was also affected owing to R12 million being owed by Section-21 schools across the province. This situation highlights an alarming financial crisis impacting on essential services and undermining public welfare.

The PSA demands an urgent investigation led by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, along with the MECs and Ministers responsible for these Departments, into the financial obligations by health facilities, schools, and municipalities across the province. It is imperative to conduct a thorough audit to assess the extent of these debts and provide transparency regarding the financial standing of these critical institutions. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs must release a comprehensive report, detailing government departments at risk of disconnection and the amounts owed. Water is a basic human right and a vital component for the effective functioning of healthcare and educational institutions. These disconnections endanger public health and safety whilst also reflecting a broader issue of systemic neglect that demands immediate rectification. Grey's Hospital, as a provider of essential healthcare services, and the Department of Basic Education, serving the public, should never face such service interruptions owing to unpaid bills.

The PSA urges the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Cabinet to work closely with MECs for the Departments of Health and Basic Education. Immediate action is needed to resolve this crisis and ensure that health and education facilities have the necessary resources to provide uninterrupted services. The PSA stands firm in holding government entities accountable and will continue to advocate for effective governance practices.

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