

MEDIA RELEASE PSA calls for investigation after office block at Limpopo High School is destroyed by fire

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) was shocked to learn that an office block at Mohlatlego Machaba High School in Mopani West District, in Limpopo was completely destroyed in a fire on 20 July 2024.

The cause of the fire remains unknown. The entire structure, including the roof, was destroyed despite efforts by the emergency fire brigade to salvage the office block. The School lost everything, including learners' personal files, computers, printers, and photocopiers that were kept in the office. In addition, some financial records and learning and teaching materials were also destroyed. It is commendable that the police have already opened an enquiry docket to determine the cause of fire at the School.

The incident happened whilst the School was busy with a recruitment process to fill promotional positions. This incident may cause delays in this matter.

The Department of Education is already struggling with an infrastructure development backlog. Many schools do not have decent office blocks or adequate classes, which leads to overcrowding. The eradication of pit toilets remains a challenge. Limpopo cannot afford to lose buildings and resources that are already inadequate.

The safety of employees and government buildings is critical for continuous provision of services to the citizens of Limpopo. Safety measures at government buildings, including schools, remain crucial and collaboration between departments can save government vast amounts for replacing equipment and repairing damaged buildings. Simple safety practices such as storing wood far from buildings, maintaining the grounds, maintaining, and servicing air conditioners, and having functional health and safety committees, will assist in curbing such incidents.

The PSA urges the Department of Education to ensure that a full investigation is conducted to determine the cause of the fire and to swiftly replace lost equipment to avoid disruptions in teaching and learning. The Department must further work with the Department of Public Works to conduct a full audit on the safety of buildings, especially in respect of fire risks.

END

