

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA concerned about fires at Free State National District Hospital**

DATE 15 July 2024

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about recent fire incidents at the National District Hospital in Bloemfontein in the Free State.

Despite swift responses and activation of contingency measures, the cause of the initial blaze 7 July 2024 remains unknown. This lack of clarity is further compounded by a subsequent fire on 9 July 2024 that was fortunately contained.

In response to these incidents, the PSA has formally written to the Head of Department of the Free State Department of Health to express grave concerns about the safety of hospital employees and patients. The PSA highlighted various key issues, including investigation urgency. The PSA is troubled by the delay in determining the cause of the initial fire. Identifying the root cause is critical to preventing future incidents and ensuring the safety of all hospital occupants. Employees continue to work under uncertain and potentially hazardous conditions.

The PSA demands that the investigation into the initial fire be expedited, with findings promptly communicated to all stakeholders. Comprehensive contingency plans must be implemented immediately to safeguard employees. Such measures include regular safety drills, clear evacuation procedures, and immediate access to counselling services for affected persons.

The PSA remains committed to the safety and well-being of all Health Department employees and urges the Free State Department of Health to prioritise the mentioned concerns. The PSA is closely monitoring the situation and will continue to advocate for necessary measures to ensure a safe working environment.

END