

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA concerned about safety of Labour Inspectors in Mpumalanga following death threats
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the safety and security of Labour Inspectors of the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), following reports of death threats being made against them.

The PSA was disturbed to learn that Inspectors made inspection appointments with various employers, including Kusile and Duva power stations in Mpumalanga, which were allegedly cancelled by the Provincial Chief Inspector (PCI). The Inspectors subsequently started receiving death threats, resulting in a series of rehabilitation programs and some suffering from stress, depression and anxiety attacks, necessitating treatment at mental-health hospitals.

The PSA previously brought this matter to the attention of the Chief Director of Provincial Operations (CDPO) who has remained silent whilst the lives of employees are at stake. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* places the responsibility for a safe working environment on the employer, which in this case, is also the custodian and enforcer of the same *Act*. In contrast, the PCI and the CDPO opted to institute multiple disciplinary processes against some of the affected Inspectors. This unbecoming abuse of power aggravated the state of these Inspectors.

The lack of appetite to investigate the nature and source of these death threats is worrisome. The PSA is puzzled by senior management's protection of those who are allegedly on the payroll of "mafia" contractors at power stations at the expense of dedicated workers. It is further alleged that such unscrupulous inspectors own companies, and they visit employers to collect documents without enforcing labour legislation.

The PSA is currently engaging with the DEL's national office for a life-saving intervention to ensure that operations are restored at Emalahleni Labour Centre, and that an independent investigation be conducted to hold those responsible accountable.

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