

MEDIA RELEASE: PSA condemns alleged harm to learner at Bergview College and calls for immediate action

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EMBARGO: None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is deeply disturbed by recent allegations regarding the brutal rape and molestation of 7-year-old Cwecwe at Bergview College in Matatiele. This horrific incident has sparked national outrage, highlighting the urgent need to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and ensure the safety of children in educational institutions.

Reports indicate that the child was allegedly harmed by the caretaker, principal, and/or driver at the school, an appalling situation that raises grave concerns about the well-being of learners under the institution's care. The PSA stands in solidarity with South Africans demanding swift action from law enforcement to bring those responsible to justice.

It is particularly alarming that while the caretaker and driver reportedly agreed to provide necessary samples to assist in the investigation, the principal allegedly refuses to cooperate. Such reluctance is deeply troubling, especially in cases concerning the safety of vulnerable children. Transparency and accountability must be non-negotiable in any inquiry of this nature.

The PSA calls for an immediate, thorough, and transparent investigation into these serious allegations to ensure that all responsible parties are held accountable. The safety of the child and the pursuit of justice must remain paramount. The PSA insists that the principal, caretaker, driver, and other involved individuals fully cooperate with authorities to expedite the investigation.

Furthermore, the PSA emphasizes the urgent need for medical, emotional, and psychological support for the child and her family during this traumatic time. It is crucial that the affected family receives the necessary care and assistance to aid in their recovery and well-being.

Speaking at the annual Uyinene Mrwetyana Memorial Lecture at Kingswood College, the Minister of Basic Education Siviwe Gwarube acknowledged the national outrage over Cwecwe's case and emphasized the need for unity in action against violence perpetrated against women and children. The PSA echoes this call and urges the government, civil society, and communities to take decisive steps to combat GBV and child abuse. The PSA also notes with concern the controversy surrounding the legal representation of the alleged perpetrator by AfriForum. While every accused individual has the right to legal defence, this case transcends racial and political divisions. It is fundamentally about justice for a child whose life has been irrevocably shattered. The focus must remain on ensuring that justice is served and that measures are implemented to prevent such tragedies in the future.

In light of this distressing incident, the PSA urges the relevant authorities to implement stringent safety measures to prevent similar occurrences, not only at Bergview College but across all educational institutions. Schools must be safe environments for children, and this tragic event underscores the urgent need for enhanced protective measures. The nation owes it to Cwecwe and the innumerable other victims of such violence to demand justice and work towards a society where children can thrive without fear of harm. The time for empty promises is over; now is the time for action.

The PSA demands swift and decisive action, full cooperation from all parties involved, and comprehensive support for the affected child and her family.

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