



MEDIA RELEASE: **PSA condemns armed attack on Mdantsane Correctional Centre**

DATE: 4 March 2022

EMBARGO: None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked by reports that seven armed robbers entered the Mdantsane Correctional Centre in the Eastern Cape on 1 March 2022 and overpowered the two officials stationed at the main gate.

The officials were allegedly robbed of their phones and the suspects demanded firearms, which the officials did not have. The suspects made their way further into the Centre where they were confronted by a third official who was then shot by the suspects before they fled. The PSA understands that the injured official is recovering in hospital and wished him a speedy recovery.

It is incomprehensible that armed criminals can enter a Correctional Centre, rob officials, shoot an official and escape without being caught. The PSA has on numerous occasions raised that the Department of Correctional Services is not adequately resourced in terms of human resources and equipment to enable officials to perform their duties. The PSA's repeated calls to fully capacitate Correctional Centres has been ignored, thus exposing officials to risks and danger in contravention of section 8 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*. Officials already cannot protect themselves against violence by inmates and now become victims of armed attacks, similar to recent attacks on police stations.

The departmental budget was cut during this financial year, despite a call by the PSA for an increased budget to allow for the appointment of 13 000 additional officials to enhance safe working conditions in Correctional Centres. Correctional officials are stabbed, raped, beaten, and held hostage whilst their employer seems oblivious of the situation. The PSA urgently calls on the Minister of Justice and Correctional Service together as well as the Minister of Finance to implement a new funding model that will ensure that more Correctional officials are trained and appointed in permanent positions to ensure that the Department can adhere to its offender-official ratio and provide safety to officials who risk their lives daily when reporting for duty.

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