

MEDIA RELEASE PSA condemns Mpumalanga High Court's failure to comply with occupational health and safety standards

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed by ongoing safety and security risks faced by employees at the Mpumalanga High Court in Nelspruit.

Opened on 13 May 2019, the Mpumalanga High Court building has yet to meet occupational health and safety (OHS) standards. A letter from the Mbombela Municipality, dated 15 April 2019, confirms the building's non-compliance and calls for urgent action by the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, mandating them to rectify safety deficiencies within three months. Despite this, no OHS certificate has been issued to confirm the building's safety.

Significant hazards include malfunctioning toilets, electrical issues, and damaged ceiling boards. For more than four years, leaking roofs have been temporarily managed with dustbins to catch rainwater. Maintenance disputes between the two Departments have left the building's safety concerns unaddressed. A garage door blocking a parking area has remained dislodged for two years, restricting parking access. More concerning are the unsanitary conditions, such as water from upper floors draining into ground-floor offices, some containing wastewater from toilets. The building's design appears to be flawed, with numerous offices lacking windows in violation of OHS requirements for access to fresh air. The building further lacks accessibility features, such as a ramp for persons with disabilities.

Following a recent inspection by the Department of Employment and Labour, a prohibition certificate was issued, declaring the building unsafe for occupancy. The PSA, in its capacity as a professional Union, calls on its members and staff to adhere strictly to this prohibition. The PSA remains committed to monitoring the situation closely and advocating for swift, lasting resolutions to these serious safety issues.

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