

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA condemns Musina Magistrate Court hearings under trees**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the decision of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to continue allowing the Magistrate Court in Musina in Limpopo to conduct court cases under trees as inappropriate and demeaning to clients and officials.

Although the Magistrate Court was closed on 21 July 2021 owing to the poor condition of the building, the Department indicated that cases should continue, despite the lack of appropriate space. The arrangement is unprofessional and exposes officials to danger as security has not been enhanced. Other options, such as the provision of temporary mobile structures, could have ensured uninterrupted services whilst maintaining the dignity of customers and employees. Priority cases could have been transferred to other courts.

This outdoor arrangement further contravenes section 8 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which dictates that every employer must provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working place that is safe and without risk to the health of employees. Working outside compromises security for employees and the employer is advised to reconsider and urgently provide safe and conducive alternatives.

The South African Constitution provides that everyone has the right to dignity and working under tree goes against the spirit of justice. The PSA, as representative Union, is addressing this issue with the Department and calls upon the Minister of Justice to urgently address the problem and ensure that whilst a permanent solution is sought, appropriate alternatives are provided as a matter of urgency.

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