



MEDIA RELEASE: **PSA condemns unhealthy conditions at Limpopo Court**

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EMBARGO: None

ENQUIRIES: communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) strongly condemns the exposure of employees to unhealthy conditions at Tshilwawhusiku Magistrates Court near Makhado in Limpopo.

The PSA visited the Court on 1 March 2022 as part of a campaign to assess compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* by the Department of Justice in Limpopo. The PSA has been monitoring the Department continuously, particularly after the Musina Magistrate Court scandal, where this Court was closed after the PSA's intervention owing to the danger that the building posed to employees and clients. It was trusted that the Department would have learned from this incident and gotten its house in order with regards health and safety standards at all Magistrates offices. This was, however, clearly not the case and the PSA was shocked by the working conditions at Tshilwayhusiku Court. An unused toilet is used as a storeroom, kitchen, rest room, and change room for Court employees. It is deplorable that a Department responsible for upholding constitutional values can be so irresponsible and impact on employees' dignity by allowing the storage of food in a toilet.

The situation is unashamedly attributed to the lack of space and the fact that the Court was identified for renovation, which could not happen for number of years owing to a lack of funds. Following an inspection of the Court and unsuccessful engagement with the management of the Department, the PSA escalated the matter to Department of Employment and Labour for immediate intervention. The Department should be ashamed of its disregard for employees' rights, irrespective of the illogical explanation by the management of the Department. The Department further clearly has no regard for employees' risk of exposure to COVID-19 owing to the unhygienic conditions.

The PSA calls on the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development to institute a comprehensive audit of state of buildings, including all Courts, in Limpopo to ensure urgent compliance to occupational health and safety standards.

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