



MEDIA RELEASE	PSA demands investigation following bomb threats at Durban Magistrates Court
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about public-sector employees' safety following recent bomb threats at the Durban Magistrates Court.

On 23 July 2024, employees were ordered to evacuate the 12-floor building at 88 Somtseu Road. This incident highlighted critical issues regarding management's response to such threats that put employees' lives at risk. The PSA is concerned that managers failed to release staff at both the High Court and Magistrates Court, despite risks.

This is not the first bomb threat, and the PSA urges increased awareness to avoid panic amongst the public and employees. The PSA has identified key safety concerns, including the lack of clear assembly points leading to confusion and panic amongst employees during an emergency. Communication failures, with inadequate and delayed information dissemination, are also of concern.

The PSA therefore demands an immediate investigation into response protocols at the Durban Magistrates Court and High Court. Comprehensive and effective prevention measures should be implemented to ensure employee safety. These include establishing clear assembly points, communicated to all employees, as directed in section 8(1) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*, which states that, "*Every employer shall ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that every employee at work is not exposed to any hazard*". In addition, enhanced communication strategies must be adopted, ensuring timely and accurate information dissemination, as directed in section 8(2) of the *OHSA*: "*Every employer shall, after consultation with the health and safety representatives, develop and implement a written policy concerning the protection of the health and safety of its employees*". There is a need for regular emergency drills to familiarise employees with procedures and reduce panic during emergencies, as indicated in section 9 of the *OHSA*, which directs that, "*Every employer shall, in consultation with the health and safety representatives, develop and implement a written emergency procedure*".

Employers have a legal duty under the *OHSA* to ensure employee safety and welfare. The PSA further proposes that in the event of occupational health and safety threats, the affected area should be evacuated immediately. The emergency response plan should be activated, and emergency services notified.

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