

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA extremely concerned about arson of health facilities**

**DATE**                                      5 May 2021

**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                              communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), which represents more than 80 000 health-sector workers, is gravely concerned about recent arson attacks on health facilities and buildings.

These attacks are regarded as a serious threat to the health and safety of members of the public and employees working at these institutions. The PSA is further concerned about the sudden spate of such incidents at various hospitals, with fires seemingly starting without explanation. The PSA is already extremely concerned about the imminent collapse of the South African health system and these arson attacks on flag-ship hospitals will put additional strain on the strained health system. The arson incidents at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital in Johannesburg in April 2021 and FH Odendaal in Limpopo on 4 May 2021 will have severe repercussions, bearing in mind the predicted COVID-19 third wave of infections.

The PSA expresses gratitude towards the health workers who stepped up during these incidents and assisted patients and colleagues. Their professional responses are indicative of their dedication to their calling.

To prevent future tragedies, the PSA calls for the Ministers of Health and Police for the urgent establishment of a special unit to investigate these attacks and for decisive action against culprits. The PSA further advises the Department of Health to implement stringent security measures at health facilities to prevent further damage to infrastructure and loss of equipment.

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