

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA pleads with communities to assist in preventing attacks on police**

DATE 1 March 2021

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted with dismay and sadness the spike in killings of SA Police Service (SAPS) employees, especially in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.

The PSA extends sincere condolences to the families of the two SAPS officers who were slain whilst patrolling in Bloekombos in Cape Town and an officer who was killed whilst responding to a domestic violence complaint in Chatsworth in KwaZulu-Natal. Such attacks and murders are strongly condemned as these also lame the country's safety and security, whilst often communities are bystanders.

Limited resources, inadequate infrastructure and poor remuneration are major challenges in the SAPS. The after-effect of SAPS investigations will not deter the perpetrators behind these heinous activities. Government needs to ensure that more stringent measures are in place to enhance safety. The PSA has on many occasions called for the prioritisation of safety in this sector. All stakeholders should be part of the solution to eradicate this scourge, but Government should lead the way.

Poor socio-economic circumstances in many communities and the behavioural patterns of criminals present challenges for SAPS employees. Police officers are under-capacitated to deal with such circumstances, which impacts on their safety. The cold-blooded, brutal way in which these officers were killed by attackers by being shot in the head while still inside the police vehicle, demands implementation of drastic measures for police safety. The victim of the KwaZulu-Natal incident was shot in the chest by gunman inside a house and died instantly. These incidents indicate a lack of capacity and the need to adequately staff the police force. Operationally they are severely stretched owing to the size of communities that must be serviced and being outnumbered and risking their lives. In the Western Cape incident, the officers were also robbed of their official firearms by the criminals.

The PSA pays tribute all officers who have lost their lives in line of duty as well as those who succumbed to COVID-19. The PSA thanks every SAPS employee for the tireless, selfless efforts in combating the scourge of crime in pursuit of ensuring a safe environment in South Africa. In a democratic society, law enforcers are tasked with the prevention of crime, apprehension of offenders, maintenance of peace and security in the communities. Decisive steps need to be taken to address these multiple factors affecting police officers.

The PSA trusts that Government is noting these shocking incidents and will take urgent steps to provide additional protection for SAPS employees. These include increasing capacity by filling all vacant, funded posts and creating additional posts. In addition, COVID-19 vaccinations should be fast-tracked to protect the policing sector against this invisible enemy.

END