

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA raises alarm over prolonged closure of Free State Mortuary
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the continued closure of the Free State Mortuary, which was shut down by the Department of Employment and Labour in November 2024 owing to serious health and infection control concerns.

Whilst some of these issues have been addressed, critical challenges remain, including ongoing electricity disruptions, water supply issues, and inadequate air circulation. Despite repeated warnings and recommendations, management has failed to fully resolve these problems, raising serious concerns about a commitment to ensuring a functional and safe working environment.

An engineering report dating back to 2013 identified severe deficiencies in the mortuary's drainage and refrigeration systems, which are essential for the proper preservation of bodies and conducting post-mortems. These long-standing issues were ignored, contributing to the current unacceptable conditions. Adding to the crisis, mortuary employees are now forced to operate from a single small office, compromising confidentiality when grieving families have to identify deceased persons. Management is aware of these breaches of privacy but has taken no steps to rectify the situation.

The closure of the mortuary has also resulted in legal complications, as the South African Police Service (SAPS) is unable to obtain critical documentation required for case prosecutions. Mortuary employees are facing mounting pressure from the SAPS and the public, yet management remains unresponsive.

The PSA urges the relevant authorities to take immediate and decisive action to address these issues and restore essential services at the Free State Mortuary. The dignity of the deceased, the rights of grieving families, and the working conditions of employees must be prioritised without further delay.

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