

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA raises concerns over conditions at Eastern Cape mortuaries**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) recently visited various mortuaries across the Eastern Cape and uncovered alarming conditions requiring urgent intervention.

Reports received indicate that unidentified bodies have been stored at various mortuaries since 2019 owing to delays in burial arrangements or removal from the premises. There are also critical infrastructure challenges, with buildings suffering from poor maintenance. Shockingly, some mortuaries are using containers to store bodies, which fail to meet health standards for proper storage. The PSA further discovered that employees work under hazardous conditions without adequate tools and proper protective clothing. Items supplied are often substandard and do not meet the South African Bureau of Standards requirements for the line of work. Delayed distribution of such items is contributing to the risk.

Staff shortages remain a significant challenge, forcing employees to work overtime. This often extends beyond their scope of practice. An increase in staffing, especially more doctors, is necessary to address these pressing issues.

The PSA urges the MEC of Health in the Eastern Cape to urgently address these issues and take steps to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. The immediate removal or state burial of unidentified bodies that have been held in these mortuaries for years is a further priority.

END