

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA welcomes closure of unsafe Department of Home Affairs building in Bela-Bela**

**DATE**                                      28 August 2024

**EMBARGO**                                None

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

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) commends the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL) inspectors' prompt intervention, and the issuing of a prohibition notice in respect of the Department of Home Affairs office in Bela-Bela in Limpopo.

The PSA visited the office on 23 August 2024 and discovered that employees were working in an unsafe building, which is in contravention of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS)*. The electricity supply was not fully functional as it was continuously tripping, thus posing danger to employees and members of the public. In addition, the building has no proper ventilation, a worn-out ceiling, inadequate filing space, and with the presence of rodents.

The PSA escalated the matter to DEL resulting in an urgent inspection of the building and subsequently, the issuing of the prohibition notice on 26 August 2024.

It is concerning that many government buildings in Limpopo are old, dilapidated, and neglected, which expose employees to health and safety risks. The employer must bring about and maintain, as far as practicable, a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health and safety of employees. The employer is legally obligated to ensure that the workplace is free of health and safety hazards. Whilst the PSA commends the work done by the DEL inspectors in closing the unsafe office, there is a concern about the status of many buildings and the disregard of the health and safety regulations by the Limpopo Provincial Administration.

The PSA urges the Limpopo Provincial Administration to prioritise the health and safety of its employees by procuring suitable office accommodations in compliance with the *OHS*. The PSA will ensure that the health and safety of employees in Limpopo are prioritised. Such urgent intervention will assist in ensuring the safety of employees as they cannot be expected to work in unsafe buildings.

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