

MEDIA RELEASE PSA welcomes government approval of proclamation to regulate spaza shops amidst food poisonings crises

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the recent announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa regarding approval of the proclamation to regulate spaza shops across South Africa.

This significant step is part of ongoing efforts to enhance the safety, quality, and sustainability of these vital community businesses. The intervention comes at a critical time where South Africa is witnessing an unprecedented spike in food poisoning reports, with 14 fatalities and hundreds of children falling ill. Many of these children claimed to have eaten food from spaza shops, with a few exceptions where learners consumed food from the schools as part of the national school nutrition programme.

The situation was a ticking time bomb with an outcry in communities over expired or fake products being sold by these shops for years without adequate government response. Whilst spaza shops play an essential role in communities, providing convenient access to goods and services, the non-regulation of these establishments created fertile ground for quick profit at the expense of citizens.

The President attributed the current situation to the recklessness of spaza shops as well as lack of health and safety measures by these shops. He, however, he omitted to point a finger at government for its role in this crisis.

The PSA's calls for proper regulations and the appointment of Health Inspectors to monitor compliance of spaza shops that were mushrooming at every corner were ignored. The PSA calls on the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs to prioritise this matter as the country cannot afford more delays. The PSA calls for intensification of monitoring of spaza shops by relevant authorities to prevent a further loss of lives. Reported cases must be subjected to investigation and where deliberate foul play is proven, the culprits need to face the full extent of the law.

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