

Call for HRC and Health Ombud intervention at Gauteng hospital

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Call for HRC and Health Ombud intervention at Gauteng hospital May 1st, 2019 South Africa
Organisation: Position: Deadline Date: Location: The Public Servants Association of SA said it was appalled by the inhumane conditions faced by mental-health patients at the Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital in Gauteng, urging the health ombudsman and the Human Rights Council to intervene, reports The Citizen. The PSA said its shop stewards had tried in vain to advocate for proper care and housing for mental-health patients at the hospital. PSA GM Ivan Fredericks said: "The PSA witnessed 33 patients in a single ward equipped for 14 patients, with four new admissions also being processed. The 37 patients have the use of one ablution facility, one bathtub at a time when the entire hospital has been without water for a week. "The same ward where these patients are accommodated have rooms for patients in isolation. These rooms, however, have broken walls that make [a] mockery of the isolation rooms. It also cannot be correct that building contractors are working with their tools in the space occupied by mental-health patients." The PSA is quoted in its members had been forced to fight a fire in the hospital's laundry room on Monday, with no co-ordinated plan or an occupational health and safety representative available to provide guidance on evacuation and to ensure that trained persons were dealing with the blaze. "We cannot allow such conditions to prevail in public institutions where communities trust public servants with the lives of their loved ones," Fredericks said. "The PSA calls on the health ombudsman and the Human Rights Council to act decisively against these human-rights violations and avert a repeat of the Life-Esidimeni tragedy," he added, alluding to the deaths of 143 people at psychiatric facilities in Gauteng from causes including starvation and neglect. The report says he called on the Labour Department to urgently conduct an inspection of the hospital "to prevent injuries or loss of life". The Citizen report.