

MEDIA RELEASE	Assault of Court Manager at Piet Retief Magistrate's Court: PSA demands immediate suspension of perpetrator
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) denounces the violent assault of a female Court Manager at Piet Retief Magistrate's Court in Mpumalanga on 21 November 2025.

The incident underscores the persistent failure of state institutions to safeguard women employed in the public service. On the afternoon of 21 November 2025, whilst the Court Manager was on a work-related telephone call with a colleague in Emalahleni, a male subordinate entered her office and launched an unprovoked physical attack. The assault resulted in her falling over an office chair, leaving her shaken and crying for help. Shockingly, no security personnel or other employees responded to her pleas. The colleague on the telephone line had to raise an alarm and summon assistance. The victim was subsequently taken to a medical facility, where she received treatment for injuries sustained during the attack.

This was, however, not an isolated occurrence. The same employee was implicated in an assault on another female supervisor two months earlier. Despite the earlier complaint, the employer failed to take decisive disciplinary or protective measures, allowing the perpetrator to remain in a position where he could reoffend. The PSA views this inaction as a blatant disregard for the safety of women in the workplace and a stark illustration of systemic weaknesses in accountability, security response, and leadership oversight.

The Court Manager took all appropriate steps following the assault. She has reported the incident to the South African Police Service, underwent a medical examination, and lodged an injury on duty claim. In a statement to the PSA, she made it clear that she cannot safely return to her duties whilst the alleged perpetrator remains on the premises. This is a reasonable request given the trauma she endured and the risk of further harm.

South Africa's current *16 Days of Activism of No Violence Against Women and Children* campaign, which aims to raise awareness of violence against women and children, should serve as a period of heightened vigilance and decisive action. Instead, the assault at Piet Retief Magistrate's Court reveals that even institutions charged with upholding the law are not immune to gender-based violence. The failure to provide a safe working environment for women in the public service erodes public trust and contravenes constitutional rights and international labour standards.

The PSA reiterates the Union's non-negotiable demands for immediate remedial action, including the immediate suspension of the alleged perpetrator pending the outcome of a thorough, impartial investigation, provision of a safe, alternative work environment for the Court Manager, ensuring her physical and psychological well-being whilst the investigation proceeds. There must be an expedited and comprehensive investigation of this incident and the previous complaint, the response of security staff, and broader systemic failures that allowed violence to

recur. Robust accountability mechanisms should be implemented to hold security personnel, line managers, and senior officials responsible for any lapses in safety protocols or delayed responses.

The PSA regards any failure to implement these measures as tacit tolerance of gender-based violence in the public sector. Women who serve the public should not be targets. They are professionals deserving of respect, safety, and protection. The PSA is committed to advocate for justice, uphold workplace safety, and safeguard the fundamental rights of public servants.

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