

MEDIA RELEASE

COVID-19: DCS non-compliance to issue personal protective equipment - PSA threatens possible litigation

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the failure by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) to implement precautionary measures for containment of the COVID-19 virus in Correctional facilities.

The majority of Correctional Officials have not been issued with the required personal protective equipment such as sanitisers, water facilities and protective gear. Therefore, the centres do not comply with a work environment that promotes personal hygiene and safety standards. The PSA pointed out that the failure by the Department to implement safe working conditions exposes employees to a high risk of infection, which also places inmates at a risk of contracting the virus. This conduct by the Department is not only reckless, but also illegal as it is in contravention of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*.

The Department has already a shortage of staff and an outbreak in the prison system will have a catastrophic impact on the Department's ability to ensure continued functioning of the Correctional system.

The PSA once again calls on the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services to act swiftly and ensure that all Correctional facilities are equipped with the required equipment without delay. Failure to comply with the set standards will result in drastic measures by the PSA, which may include litigation.

END