

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA outraged by Department of Home Affairs' failure to follow protocol and regulations at Lebombo Border Post**

DATE 24 July 2020

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association, as representative Union of most employees at the Department of Home Affairs, stationed at the Lebombo Border Post in Mpumalanga, is dismayed at the failure to follow occupational health and safety protocols and COVID-19 regulations and concealing information.

On 23 July 2020, members at the border post alerted the PSA to the fact that two employees had tested positive for COVID-19. Management did, however, not alert employees and they only heard from other employees about the confirmed cases and that the office would be closed for 24 hours.

This conduct is unacceptable as the Department is fully aware of the national crisis brought about by the pandemic. The Department, however, remains discreet when employees test positive to ensure uninterrupted services. The PSA immediately engaged senior management and was shocked by their response. According to senior management, ports of entry operate differently from provincial offices.

The PSA regards these actions as reckless and irresponsible as it exposes employees to hazardous working conditions. The PSA calls on the Department to immediately screen all employees who were in direct contact with the infected employees. The PSA raised the Union's dissatisfaction with this non-adherence of prescripts in writing to the Provincial Manager of the Department of Home Affairs and copied the Director-General. The matter will also be addressed in the next Provincial COVID-19 Committee meeting.

END