

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **Department of Home Affairs Offices: PSA warns Minister**

**DATE**                                      17 December 2020

**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                             [communication@psa.co.za](mailto:communication@psa.co.za)

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), as the Union representing the majority of employees of the Department of Home Affairs, is appalled by comments made by the Minister of Home Affairs regarding the shocking conditions of the Department's offices.

The PSA has continuously raised concerns regarding conditions in various offices of the Department with the Minister. On 7 May 2020, the PSA wrote a letter to the Minister to highlight non-compliance with safety requirements at certain offices. The Minister failed to respond to the PSA's concerns. The PSA further during COVID-19 National Steering Committee meetings raised concerns regarding offices' infrastructure. It is difficult for clients and employees to maintain social distancing and observe COVID-19 protocols owing to the lack of space and poor infrastructure of offices. This situation compromises the health and safety of clients and employees.

The Minister has been responsible for this Department for more than two years and should be completely familiar with current conditions. It is therefore surprising to the PSA that he would now comment on the state of the offices. The Minister has failed to implement measures to improve and maintain the infrastructure of offices. The PSA has also urged the Minister and the Department's management to comply with COVID-19 regulations by improving the infrastructure. The Department should consider purchasing office space as opposed to leasing such as this will ensure proper maintenance of buildings.

The PSA will continue to monitor the situation and also engage the Department of Employment and Labour regarding offices that do not comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and COVID-19 regulations. The PSA once again warns the Minister to act swiftly to improve the working conditions and to create safe environments for its employees and citizens relying of the Department's services.

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