

MEDIA RELEASE                      **International Teacher's Day: PSA applauds educators who endure**

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With 2020 being an unprecedented difficult year, and a new normal for everyone, the Public Servants Association (PSA), pays special tribute to the country's dedicated educators as the world commemorates International Teacher's Day on 5 October 2020.

Teachers are a vital resource in grooming learners to be able to contribute to society. The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on schooling in 2020, making it an extremely challenging year for teachers to ensure that learners continue with their education during lockdown and school closures. Social distancing measures, safety precautions and socio-economic factor added additional stress. Despite these challenges and disregarding their own safety, teachers worked extra hard to ensure that learners were not left behind.

Being a teacher in South Africa comes with unique challenges. Apart from the well-known fact that educators are inadequately remunerated, the meagre salary increases that were due to them and other public servants in April 2020 have, to date, failed to materialise. In addition, too many teachers have fell victim to physical and verbal attacks, as well as allegations of faking co-morbidities, while the employer has failed to ensure the health and safety of many teachers and learners.

The PSA, as an extension of the public service community, cannot thank our country's teachers enough for their dedication toward their profession. The odds are stacked high against providing quality education, yet, teachers persevere to ensure that learners pass their grades. Teachers provide us with proof that in the absence of proper infrastructure, and against the odds, a well-directed mind and attitude can deliver better results under a tree than in the best-equipped classroom.

The PSA applauds teachers for not giving up on the task of teaching and influencing behaviour to create a better future for young South Africans. The PSA also pays tribute to all teachers who lost their lives to COVID-19, they will not be forgotten.

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