

MEDIA RELEASE **Moruleng Secondary School assault of learners: PSA calls for investigation**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) was made aware that the Principal of Moruleng Secondary School in Seshego in Limpopo administered corporal punishment to nine learners despite the fact that this is prohibited in terms of section 10 of the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*.

The *Act* clearly states that no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner. Anyone practicing doing so is guilty of an offence and liable for conviction of assault. The PSA noted that despite the case being reported to the Circuit and District more than two months ago, there has been no action. Instead, the PSA has been alerted that the school's governing body (SGB) is allegedly unduly interfering with the matter. The action by of the SGB is deemed in serious light as it is tantamount to defeating the ends of justice. The case cannot be watered down and there should be a proper investigation by those with necessary competence. Justice must be maintained, and learners' rights must be protected. The PSA will not ignore the clear infringement of the rights of employees and learners where the law is not respected.

The continuous silence by the Department of Education sends a message that it is in order to administer corporal punishment to learners, which is contrary to legislative framework. It is further extremely concerning that the Department of Education did nothing to ensure that the whistle blower in this matter is protected. The constant intimidation of the whistle blower is perpetuated by the Department's non-action and is unacceptable. The Department has a legal duty to ensure discipline in the workplace. The principal should be placed on precautionary suspension to allow for an unhindered investigation. The PSA therefore calls for the immediate suspension of the principal and a proper investigation into the matter. Failure to observe meaningful progress of this case, the PSA will open a criminal case against the principal, the SGB and the District Director. The matter will also be reported to the South African Council for Educators.

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