

MEDIA RELEASE	Mpumalanga water crisis: PSA demands emergency intervention in humanitarian catastrophe
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the systemic and catastrophic failure of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government and its municipalities to provide clean, accessible water as the most basic of human necessities in the Province.

For decades, residents of KaBokweni, Nkomazi, Emalahleni, Thembisile Hani, and Naas have been subjected to indignity. Since February 2024, and worsening into 2026, these communities have endured dry taps, forced to survive on contaminated river water or held hostage by "water mafias" that profit from the deliberate sabotage of public infrastructure.

This situation is not merely an administrative lapse but a direct violation of section 27(1)(b) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, which explicitly states that "everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water". By failing to maintain aging infrastructure and allowing corruption to bleed the water budget dry, government is acting in open defiance of its constitutional mandate. Water is not a privilege to be auctioned by the highest bidder. It is an unalienable human right.

The water crisis has paralyzed the functionality of government institutions with public servants being forced to work in environments that are hazardous and dehumanising. Hospitals and clinics are operating without running water, compromising sterilisation and patient care. Public offices have become breeding grounds for disease, with no water for sanitation or basic hygiene. There is no oversight regarding the quality and cleanliness of water supplied *via* private tankers. The PSA has also noted a dangerous reliance on a "shadow" water economy where the health of the public is traded for the profit of the few.

The PSA will no longer accept empty promises of "master plans". The Union demands the declaration of a National State of Disaster, calling on the President to act on the water supply-crisis under the *Disaster Management Act*. This will allow for the immediate mobilisation of resources and the bypass of bureaucratic red tape to repair the Loskop Bulk Water Scheme and other failing projects. The so-called "water mafias" and vandals must be met with the full might of the state. The PSA demands 24-hour tactical security at all pump stations and reservoirs. An immediate forensic investigation is required into the relationship between municipal officials and private water- tanker owners. There must also be a shift from "patchwork repairs" to an active replacement of the Province's crumbling pipeline network.





The PSA stands in solidarity with protesting communities. The Union warns government that if this crisis is not addressed, the wheels of the state will grind to a halt as public servants cannot work under conditions that strip them of their dignity and threaten their lives.

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