

MEDIA RELEASE	Northwest Parks and Tourism Board: PSA demands urgent intervention in health and safety conditions
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed by severe health and safety violations faced by employees at various institutions under the North West Parks and Tourism Board (NWPTB), including Madikwe Game Reserve, Wolwespruit Nature Reserve, Pilanesberg National Park, and Taung Hotel School.

Despite the high-risk environments in which these employees operate, including exposure to wild animals, reptiles, hazardous terrain, and collapsing infrastructure, the NWPTB has failed to provide the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) or uphold basic occupational health and safety (OHS) protocols. This negligence endangers workers' lives and constitutes a direct violation of South Africa's labour and safety legislation.

At Wolwespruit Nature Reserve, employees do patrols without proper uniforms or PPE. They are left vulnerable in unsafe terrains, with no access to vehicles and are forced to work near overflowing septic tanks that pose a serious hygiene risk. At Madikwe Game Reserve, employees live in deteriorating staff housing with collapsing ceilings, broken sanitation facilities, and non-functional electric fencing that allows dangerous wildlife into their living areas. Many structures still contain asbestos roofing, a banned material owing to its severe health risks. At Pilanesberg National Park, only a select few receive adequate protective gear, leaving other employees exposed to venomous snakes and other threats. At Taung Hotel School, fire extinguishers have not been serviced, with unchecked overgrowth increasing fire hazards and the presence of reptiles on the premises.

These appalling conditions show a systemic failure by the NWPTB to meet the most basic legal and moral obligations towards its workforce. The PSA strongly condemns this gross negligence and demands urgent action. The PSA calls for emergency inspections at all affected facilities, immediate procurement and distribution of PPE to all frontline employees, servicing of all fire and emergency safety equipment, upgrading of employee accommodation, and removal of all hazardous materials such as asbestos. The enforcement of OHS standards must be applied consistently across all NWPTB sites.

Should these urgent calls for action not be heeded, the PSA will have no choice but to escalate the matter through legal channels, including formal complaints to the Department of Employment and Labour, the Public Protector, and relevant parliamentary oversight committees. The lives and dignity of public servants cannot be compromised. The PSA is ready to defend the Union's members against any continued exposure to unsafe working conditions.

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