

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	<b>Nurses' Day 2023: PSA values services of nurses</b>
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The South African healthcare sector is facing numerous challenges, ranging from staff shortages, poor hospital management, poor remuneration, an ageing nurse population, and the lack of basic resources, including essential medicines.

On Nurses' Day 2023, the Public Servants Association (PSA) appeals to all users of healthcare services to treat nurses with respect and uphold their dignity. A mere 280 000 nurses are tasked to ensure nursing services to more than 60 million citizens, whilst corruption, underspending, and fruitless and wasteful expenditure continue to impair service delivery in this sector. These professionals are expected to perform their duties despite poor resources and crumbling infrastructure. Another critical challenge is the closure of Nursing Colleges throughout the country that strains the filling of 30 000 vacant nursing posts.

Reports of attacks on healthcare workers are on the rise in provinces such as Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Free State, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape by frustrated members of the public with attacks happening predominantly against female nurses and other female healthcare workers. This includes verbal and physically abuse, being held at gun point, and being gunned down. In a recent incident, a nurse in Limpopo was attacked, robbed, and raped by a criminal. Such attacks are unacceptable, and the PSA calls for more measures to be taken to enhance security at government medical institutions, including clinics and hospitals.

Many nurses working under these circumstances are looking for greener pastures abroad, where South African nurses are highly regarded, especially in the United Kingdom and the Middle East. This steady loss of qualified nurses, as well as the fact that some 9 000 nurses are lost every month owing to retirement or death calls for urgent intervention by the Department of Health. Failure to address this looming crisis will have irreversible consequences. The PSA calls on all citizens to value the country's nurses and regard the sacrifices they make to provide critical services.

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