

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA demands urgent intervention to address unsafe government buildings in Limpopo**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed at the news of a government building that caught fire on 6 January 2020 at 96 Schoeman Street, Polokwane, endangering the lives of government employees as well as members of the public.

The PSA is outraged by the continuous breach of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* by government after a building that accommodates some 100 employees of the Limpopo Department of Rural Development and Land Reform in Polokwane again caught fire. During August 2019 the same building caught fire. The cause of the fire could not be established but the malfunctioning air-conditioner unit was suspected. The employer undertook to investigate, correct and address the matter with the assistance of the Department of Public Works. The Department did, however, not address this critical matter with the speed and urgency it required, and the lives of employees were put at stake.

At the insistence of the PSA, an urgent meeting with the Department took place on 8 January 2020 where the Union demanded that no employee should report at the building until the employer has conducted a safety assessment of the building. It was agreed that the employees will report at the Office at the Chief Director who will then indicate where they will carry out their duties until alternative accommodation is found.

The PSA is disappointed that despite the matter having been reported to the Head Office, a delegation is yet to visit the building. This leaves the impression that the safety of employees is not a priority for the Department. The PSA also approached the Department of Labour to investigate as the building not only poses a danger to employees but to all persons in the vicinity.

The PSA cautioned that this incident should alert the Premier of the Province and the Department of Public Works to ensure that buildings occupied by employees of the state are safe and meet *OHSA* requirements.

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