

MEDIA RELEASE      Bela Bela Magistrates Court: PSA calls for urgent intervention to address dismal conditions

DATE                    23 January 2020

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) was shocked to find the Bela Bela Magistrates Court in a dilapidated state when responding to complaints from members regarding dismal working conditions.

Poor ventilation owing to non-functioning or faulty air conditioners, broken toilets and sewage leakages have forced employees to share one toilet with members of the public. Damaged carpets, wooden floors and tiles have resulted in various injuries on duty, but the employer has failed to intervene. Windows that have been broken for more than three years, exposing employees to dust and the elements. A leak in the roof has resulted in a ceiling collapsing.

Inadequate filing cabinets have left confidential files exposed as doors cannot be lock. Doors to Courts are also not locking, which present a safety risk to Court employees. An old asbestos structure accommodates some employees and poses a serious health risk. Parking shelters are collapsing and as a result the parking bays are no longer used. Employees must park their cars in an exposed space.

In addition, the PSA also found that cleaning contracts that lapsed seven months ago and there has not been any contingency measures or attempts to insource the cleaning services and have departmental staff employed to perform the cleaning function. These conditions are not only in contravention of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, but border on a violation of human rights. Employees' work performance and health are negatively affected.

The PSA reported these conditions to the Department of Labour to conduct an inspection and to shut down the workplace. The employer identified the Court for renovations three years ago, but nothing has transpired. The PSA calls for urgent intervention by the Minister of Justice to ensure that this matter receives immediate attention.

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