

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA calls for urgent intervention at Limpopo death-trap hospital**

**DATE**                                      25 July 2023

**EMBARGO**                                None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) visited to Elim Hospital in Makhado, Vhembe district and was horrified by the state of the hospital building.

The PSA found that employees are working in a neglected and dilapidated building that is severely cracked building and on the verge of collapse. The roof is leaking, and ceilings are collapsing. None of the toilets are functional. They smell bad and do not flush, forcing employees to carry buckets of water. The hospital relies on water supply from the Vhembe District Municipality. This situation started in 2019 after the hospital's two boreholes dried up. Another borehole was drilled outside the hospital grounds, which is not assisting as it is unable to provide water for the hospital and community members who are also suspected to have connected illegally.

The municipality does not provide water every week, leaving the hospital without with the potential of causing cross-infection as employees cannot even wash their hands. Cleaning is also compromised by the lack of water. The hospital does not have a plan to permanently address the water shortage, which is extremely concerning for the PSA as employees are working in a workplace that is unhealthy and unhygienic.

The Department of Health has not demonstrated any seriousness in addressing these issues although it acknowledged that the issue of water affects parts of the Vhembe and Mopani districts. It is, however, concerning that the matter was allowed to continue for so long without the necessary intervention. The PSA calls on the MEC of Health to urgently address these problems as workers are subjected to a hazardous and uncondusive working environment in violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

The PSA has also approached the Department of Employment and Labour to conduct building inspections, without success, as the Department seems to be inadequately staffed, making it easy for employers to get away with non-compliance. There is an urgent need for renovation of the building and addressing of the water shortage to create a conducive and safe working environment. The Department is failing to ensure that the municipality continuously provides water to the hospital. Water is a necessity and failure to address this matter will potentially lead to the closure of hospitals around Vhembe and Mopani Districts as no hospital can operate without a water supply.

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