

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA calls for urgent interventions following violent incident at Oudtshoorn Correctional Centre
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted with extreme concern the recent violent incident at the Oudtshoorn Correctional Centre, in the Western Cape, which resulted in the death of an inmate and left four Correctional officials injured.

According to reports from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), the incident occurred on the morning of 7 August 2025, during routine unlock procedures. This followed a contraband search operation conducted the previous day, during which inmates resisted the confiscation of illicit items such as cellphones and narcotics. The National Commissioner of the DCS has since confirmed that the attack was premeditated.

The PSA strongly condemns this violence and reiterates the Union's long-standing concerns regarding the safety and wellbeing of Correctional officials. The PSA most recently raised the issue of severe staff shortages during a bargaining chamber meeting with the DCS in June 2025. These shortages significantly increase the risks faced by Correctional officers, particularly during high-risk operations. The DCS is experiencing a critical shortage of staff, primarily owing to insufficient funding from National Treasury and a lack of adequate facilities to train new Correctional officers.

In view of this, the PSA will formally write to the Minister of Finance, reiterating the Union's call for urgent prioritisation of funding to enable the DCS to recruit and train frontline personnel. Current staffing levels are unsustainable and place immense pressure on existing personnel. This leads to burnout, heightened security risks, and compromised rehabilitation outcomes. If this crisis is not urgently addressed, the ability of the DCS to manage overcrowding, prevent violence, and support the reintegration of offenders into society will continue to decline.

A secure and rehabilitative correctional system is not a luxury but a necessity for a just and safe society. Correctional officials must be equipped and supported to carry out their duties safely and effectively. The PSA calls on the DCS to urgently review and strengthen security protocols, especially during high-risk operations such as cell searches and unlocking procedures. The DCS must prioritise the filling of critical vacancies to ensure the safety of officials. It is further essential that psychological support and trauma counselling be provided to officials and families affected by the recent incident. The PSA stands in solidarity with the injured officials and their families. The Union is committed to advocating for improved safety conditions and the protection DCS employees across South Africa.

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