

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA calls for urgent national intervention in Northern Cape water and sanitation crisis
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the ongoing collapse of water and sanitation services across the Northern Cape where communities and public institutions are facing conditions that have moved beyond ordinary service interruptions.

The situation now represents a full-scale humanitarian and public health emergency, threatening the functioning of clinics, schools, and government offices. While South Africa marks National Water Month, thousands of residents in the Northern Cape are enduring dry taps, overflowing sewage, unsafe sanitation, and deteriorating infrastructure. Public servants report severe operational paralysis in facilities that cannot function safely without water for hygiene, infection control, and sanitation. The crisis is widespread and persistent. Recent reports indicate that over 60% of households in some municipalities are experiencing daily water interruptions. Clinics and hospitals report difficulty maintaining infection control, schools are forced to operate without reliable sanitation, and government offices are unable to provide essential services.

Most affected municipalities and districts are Sol Plaatje Municipality (including Kimberley and surrounding areas) where residents face erratic water supply and sewage overflows, Francis Baard District, De Aar, Barkly West (and surrounding towns) report water scarcity and infrastructure decay that disrupt public service delivery. John Taolo Gaetsewe District, Kuruman, and Mothibistad face chronic water shortages, compromising healthcare and school operations. ZF Mgcawu District, Upington and rural communities deal with the irregular supply of water that threatens public health and socio-economic stability.

Public servants in these areas face unsafe working conditions. Hospitals, clinics, schools, and offices often operate without water for handwashing, sanitation, or cleaning, creating a high risk of waterborne diseases. The PSA maintains that this constitutes a direct violation of section 27 of the *Constitution*, which guarantees access to sufficient water. It further undermines international human rights obligations to provide safe and clean water. The silence of key oversight institutions, including the South African Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Public Protector, is particularly concerning. Their failure to intervene whilst communities and public servants suffer violates the principles of accountability and constitutional oversight.

The PSA calls for urgent national intervention with immediate deployment of national technical teams to repair and stabilise water infrastructure. A forensic audit is required of all water and sanitation infrastructure grants and projects in the Province. Emergency inspections of schools, clinics, and government facilities must be conducted to ensure safe water and sanitation. A transparent, time-bound provincial recovery plan is required to restore reliable water supply across the Northern Cape.



Public servants are committed to serving communities, but they cannot operate in facilities without basic water services. The PSA urges decisive national leadership to restore water security, safeguard public health, and protect the dignity of communities and workers across the Province.

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