

**MEDIA RELEASE** PSA calls for Limpopo MEC of Education's resignation

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**EMBARGO** None

**ENQUIRIES** John Teffo  
079 513 9856

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) was shocked to learn that a Grade-12 learner at Ramotshabi Secondary School in Bochum in Limpopo was raped on her way to school on 12 June 2020 as the Department failed to provide scholar transport.

The learner and other learners were walking through the bush to go to school 7 km from their village as scholar transport was not provided. The provision of reliable and safe scholar transport supports the fundamental right to education as provided in the Constitution. Scholar transport beneficiaries are the poorest of the poor and failure to provide such transport further perpetuate inequality and poverty as education is the main vehicle to escape poverty.

The PSA previously warned the Limpopo MEC of Limpopo to ensure that the scholar transport fiasco is resolved to ensure learners' safety, but the call fell on deaf ears. The PSA also cautioned the Department of Education regarding its unpreparedness to reopen schools, but the Department maintained that it was ready. The PSA made a submission to the Department to ensure provision of scholar transport, personal protective equipment, toilets, water and sanitisers before reopening schools to avoid exposing learners and employees to risks. The PSA clearly indicated that the Department needed more than three months to deal with these issues. The Department, however, continued to recklessly reopen schools.

The MEC of Education must take responsibility for this tragic incident as her negligence resulted in the raping of a young learner who will carry the emotional scar of this crime with her for the rest of her life. The MEC has failed to deal with the problem of scholar transport since January 2020, which shows that she either does not know her duties or does not regard the safety of learners as a priority. The PSA also previously requested the MEC to open criminal cases against officials and service providers who defrauded the state through improper applications and representations. The MEC also failed to act in this matter.

The MEC has failed the people of Limpopo repeatedly. The PSA calls on her to tender her resignation, failing which the Premier should relieve her of her duties.

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