

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA concerned about service following fire at Himeville Magistrate's Court, KwaZulu-Natal
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is concerned about the disruption of judicial processes and services following a devastating fire at Himeville Magistrate's Court in KwaZulu-Natal over the weekend.

Authorities stated that preliminary reports revealed that the fire started inside the Magistrate's office. It is understood that the fire erupted after a contractor allegedly started the fire on the premises. No injuries or fatalities were reported, and the speedy response of emergency services is commendable.

Courts play a critical role in upholding the rule of law, serving as the backbone of dispute resolution and justice. The partial closure of the Court building owing to fire damage inevitably leads to postponed hearings, delayed rulings, and administrative backlogs owing to damaged files, especially critical documents for facilities where digitisation has not been implemented.

The destruction of a public institution such as a magistrate's court erode public confidence in the justice system. For people seeking urgent protection orders or bail hearings, the consequences of service interruption can be particularly severe. Incidents such as this underscore the importance of disaster preparedness and business continuity in the Justice Sector. Strengthening infrastructure and ensuring risk assessment are further key to safeguarding service delivery.

The PSA welcomes the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development together with the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure cooperating to find alternative state-owned properties to accommodate the Magistrate's Court as an interim measure. The PSA calls on the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to ensure that it maintains a safe work environment, manage hazards, and comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993*. The Department has an obligation as an employer to protect the safety, health, and welfare of its employees.

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