MEDIA RELEASE **PSA condemns conduct of offenders at Correctional facilities**

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EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association of SA (PSA) that represents more than 14 000 employees of the Department of Correctional Services is appalled by the destruction and burning of property by convicted offenders serving prison sentences.

The protest that is instigated by prisoners' organisations is irresponsible and furthermore detracts from the country's efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. The PSA calls on authorities to act swiftly against the instigators of this revolt by offenders as these actions are further compromising the health and safety of Correctional Officers.

The call by prisoner's organisations to its members to revolt against the state is an opportunistic ploy to have some of its members released from prison. The PSA condemns the release of offenders who could not conform to societal rules and now exploit the COVID-19 pandemic, hoping to be released without paying for their crimes.

The PSA calls on the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services to exercise his powers and bring to account those who participated in the destruction of state property. In the wake of government's announcements on 21 April 2020 of some R500 billion to be invested to combat COVID-19 and offer relief to the poor and those unable owing to the lockdown, this destruction of state property will aggravate the financial burden on the embattled South African economy.

The PSA empathises with its members who face the mammoth task to restore calm and order at Correctional Centres and advises them to in their own interest not exceed the force needed to normalise the situation. The PSA also calls upon prisoners' organisations to calm their members and end the violence in the interest of all parties concerned.

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