

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA condemns failure by Department of Home Affairs to act on sexual harassment allegations at Alberton Office**

**DATE**                                      17 August 2023

**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                              communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 240 000 government employees, condemns the lack of action by the Department of Home Affairs after several allegations of sexual harassment against the office manager of the Alberton Home Affairs Office were reported.

The PSA received complaints from members at the Alberton Home Affairs Office regarding ongoing harassment, sexual harassment, and victimisation of staff in the office experience daily from the office manager. It is alleged that he also made sexual suggestions to female staff members who had made some mistake or error in their work, indicating that he could make these go away if they agreed to his improper proposals.

The office manager does not hesitate to treat staff members extremely badly and constantly threatens them with dismissal if they do not follow his instructions. Staff in the office brought their complaints to the attention of District Managers and the Provincial Manager who simply laughed of the matter as “it is just the way he is”, and “it is in his culture”.

Considering that the country recently on Women’s Day celebrated the rights of women, it is completely unacceptable that the Department ignores the serious allegations and not take action. The President and his cabinet, including the Minister of Home Affairs, continuously condemns gender-based violence and call for an end to this, yet when serious allegations of sexual misconduct and harassment are brought to their attention, it is ignored.

The PSA will not allow managers to abuse their position of power to exploit female members with sexual harassment and victimisation. The PSA has now reported this matter to the office of the Minister of Home Affairs, with the demand that the office manager be removed from the workplace with immediate effect.

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