

**MEDIA RELEASE**      PSA condemns knife attack on Free State Stats SA field worker

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**EMBARGO**                None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the safety of Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) employees following a serious incident in Viljoenskroon in the Free State where a field worker was allegedly attacked by a member of the public armed with a knife whilst performing official duties.

According to information received, the employee narrowly escaped serious injury during the attack. The employee's vehicle was also damaged in the incident, further highlighting the dangerous conditions under which some Stats SA employees are required to work.

The PSA strongly condemns all forms of violence, intimidation, and threats directed at public servants who are carrying out their lawful duties on behalf of the state. Employees conducting surveys and collecting statistical information play a critical role in ensuring that accurate data is available for planning and service delivery. They should not be exposed to unnecessary risks whilst performing these duties. The Viljoenskroon incident is particularly alarming as it follows a similar incident involving a Stats SA field worker on the N1 in August 2025. These incidents demonstrate the urgent need for enhanced safety measures to protect employees working in communities and remote areas.

The PSA has called on Stats SA management to urgently implement additional safety interventions, including emergency panic-button devices or wearable emergency alert systems for all field workers. A review of current safety and security protocols for field operations are required as well as regular risk assessments before field assignments are undertaken. Self-defence and personal safety awareness training should be provided to employees. The PSA further required immediate counselling and trauma debriefing services are required for affected employees.

Engagement with organised labour on practical measures to improve employee safety is required. The PSA further calls on Stats SA management to provide clear feedback on the support being provided to the affected employee and steps being taken to prevent similar incidents. The safety, health, and wellbeing of public servants must remain a priority. Public servants should have to fear for their life whilst carrying out official duties.

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