



MEDIA RELEASE **PSA condemns non-payment of electricity bills by Johannesburg Correctional Centre**

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EMBARGO None

Enquiries communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 13 000 employees of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), is dismayed by the disconnection of the electricity at the Johannesburg Correctional Centre following the non-payment of outstanding electricity bills.

This service cut creates a major risk to the health and safety of the 1 300 staff members employed at the Centre. The Centre's current generators do not have the capacity to provide electricity throughout the day and night. In addition, the Centre constantly runs out of diesel to operate the generators.

Many incidents of violence have occurred in the past where Correctional officials were assaulted or even raped by inmates. The lack of lighting in the Centre dramatically increases this risk. The lack of electricity will result in inmates being lock down all day and night in their cells and preparation of daily meals will become a major challenge. This has the potential of creating uproars and violence in the Centre, with Correctional officials only have flashlights to manage the situation.

It is deplorable that government departments that budget for the payment of electricity and other utility accounts simply fail to pay these accounts. In addition, this set a poor example for the general public in respect of the responsibility to pay debts. The PSA has information that the Johannesburg Correctional Centre is the first Correctional centre for which electricity was cut and that several other Correctional Centres will follow.

The PSA calls on government to act decisively against those responsible for the non-payment of these accounts and ensure that electricity is restored urgently to the Johannesburg Correctional Centre.

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