

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA condemns poor management and negligence at Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa Secure Centre in Gauteng**

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EMBARGO                              None

ENQUIRIES                            communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 245 000 public-sector employees, strongly condemns the poor management and disregard of occupational health and safety standards that may have led to the death of a child at Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa Secure Centre in Soshanguve.

The PSA stands united and rallies behind the employees who were suspended after the death of a child at the centre on 7 August 2023. These suspensions are viewed as a feeble attempt to avoid accountability and to use them as scapegoats. The PSA urges any affected PSA members to contact the PSA Provincial Office in Pretoria.

The PSA previously raised concerns regarding occupational health and safety (OHS) issues with the Head of Centre but the Union's requests were ignored. In one of the meetings, the Centre's management confirmed the PSA's concerns and indicated that the Human Rights Commission had even declared the Centre as non-compliant in terms of OHS. The PSA requested a copy of the report, but this was never received.

Toilets at the Centre are in a poor condition and the generator only works during the day when there is loadshedding. At night, it often runs out of diesel, which also poses a security risk to employees and the children. The PSA demands that an investigation be conducted by the Department regarding the petrol card that is used to purchase diesel since there are allegations of misuse of the card.

The PSA is also looking into the issue of non-advertising of posts whereby employees are forced to act in vacant posts without compensation. In addition, the Centre does not have a Performance Management Development System Moderation Committee to ensure that assessments are done. There are also allegations of bullying of employees by the Centre's management and non-consultation on the implementation of staff rotation that was recently implemented.

The PSA appeals to the management of the Gauteng Department of Social Development to investigate all allegations to ensure improved working conditions at the Centre.

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