

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA condemns surge in sexual abuse of learners by educators and calls for immediate action
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by the surge in cases of sexual abuse of learners by educators in South African schools.

The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) has reported a 35.4% increase in such cases, with 111 incidents recorded in the 2024/25 period, compared to 82 in the previous year. This disturbing trend highlights a critical need for stronger safeguards and systemic reforms to protect children.

The PSA unequivocally condemns any form of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, perpetrated by those entrusted with the education and care of children. Such acts are a gross violation of trust and have devastating impacts on victims and their families. The PSA stands in solidarity with affected learners and their families and calls for justice to be served swiftly and decisively.

The surge in cases is an indication that current measures are not enough to deter educators from engaging in such despicable acts. Enhanced screening and vetting should be implemented. The Department of Basic Education must ensure the continuous mandatory reporting of all suspected abuse cases and provide comprehensive trainings to school-based officials on recognising and responding to signs of abuse. Although the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has implemented the National Register for Sex Offenders, cases of sexual abuse are increasing. The PSA thus calls for the strengthening of safeguards, which should include regular audits and inspection. Promotion of community engagement could assist in creating safe environments where learners can feel safe and report perpetrators.

The PSA calls on the Department of Basic Education, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, and the South African Police Service to cooperate and tighten the grip against persons who violate children, rather than protecting them. The PSA urges the Department of Basic Education, school governing bodies, and all stakeholders in the education sector to prioritise the safety and well-being of learners.

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