

MEDIA RELEASE PSA condemns violent assaults on Correctional Officials at West Coast Management Area

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing thousands of employees of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), strongly condemns the recent violent attacks on Correctional Officials at the West Coast Management Area.

The latest incident, in which an Official was stabbed in the face in Unit 7, marks the second assault on a DCS Official since last Friday. These attacks are unacceptable and highlight the escalating dangers faced by Correctional Officials in the execution of their duties.

The PSA wishes the injured Officials a full and speedy recovery. The PSA also acknowledges the emotional trauma and distress these incidents have caused to their families, colleagues, and the broader community. The decision to place the Correctional Centre under lockdown as an immediate security and risk mitigation measure is welcomed. Emergency measures alone are, however, not enough. These repeated incidents point to serious shortcomings in safety and security that require urgent intervention.

The PSA reminds the DCS that it has a legal and moral obligation to provide employees with a safe and healthy working environment. No employee should be expected or pressured to perform duties under conditions that place their lives and safety at risk. The reported shortage of Officials, particularly in units housing hundreds of inmates, has created an unsafe working environment. Officials have expressed genuine fear for their safety, especially where only a handful of Officials - many of whom are women - are expected to manage large inmate populations.

The PSA calls on the DCS to urgently strengthen security measures, review staffing levels, implement effective risk mitigation strategies, and ensure that Officials are adequately protected whilst carrying out their duties. Violence against Correctional Officials cannot become the norm. The safety and wellbeing of those entrusted with maintaining safety and security in Correctional Centres must remain a priority.

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