

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	PSA demands intervention and accountability regarding life-threatening conditions at Mpumalanga Department of Education's Ermelo District Office
<b>DATE</b>	16 September 2025
<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by the Mpumalanga Department of Education's reckless disregard for the safety and dignity of employees at the Ermelo District Office, which has been turned into a hazardous construction site.

Instead of relocating employees whilst renovations are underway, the Department continues to force employees to work under conditions that violate the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and put their lives at risk. Employees are subjected to dust, debris, and toxic construction materials that compromise respiratory health. They face constant danger from falling objects, unstable structures, blocked emergency exits, and inadequate ventilation. In addition, unbearable noise levels disrupt productivity and mental well-being. This represents a direct attack on workers' right to a safe workplace.

Following the PSA's intervention, Labour Inspectors conducted an inspection and issued a prohibition notice, ordering the Department to remove employees until all risks are addressed. Shockingly, senior managers at the District Office have ignored the order and taken no action. This defiance of the law places lives in danger and shows a culture of impunity that cannot be tolerated.

The PSA has written to the Head of Department and now calls for the urgent intervention of the MEC for Basic Education. The MEC must personally visit the Ermelo District Office to witness the unsafe conditions. Employees should be addressed directly and be assured of immediate intervention. Full compliance with the Prohibition Notice should be enforced. Employees should be relocated to safe premises until renovations are completed. A clear, time-bound action plan for a safe return to the workplace should be provided.

The PSA warns that failure to act will force escalation to the Presidency and Courts. The PSA will not hesitate to mobilise the Union's members to defend their right to a safe and dignified workplace. Employees' lives are not negotiable. The MEC must act immediately and demonstrate leadership by holding the Department accountable.

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