

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA demands urgent action to by Department of Correctional Services KwaZulu-Natal Regional Commissioner to end water crisis at Ncome prison
DATE	26 March 2025
EMBARGO	None
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is concerned about an ongoing water shortage at the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) Ncome Prison in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

Inmates and employees have been without running water since 6 March 2025. With a population of 1 795 offenders, the prison needs a significant amount of water to maintain hygiene, sanitation, and food preparation. The current water crisis has raised concerns about the health and well-being of inmates and employees as inadequate access to clean water can lead to diseases and create an environment conducive to unrest.

The PSA has been alerted that this water shortage is ascribed to a broken water pump that must be replaced at a cost of R170 000. The water shortage has negatively affected all people residing on the prison premises, causing employees and inmates to go days without being able to bath, use toilets or have access to clean drinking water. The DCS tried to assist by making available the service of water trucks, but these services are delayed since the trucks have to fill up with water at Vryheid and drive the distance to Ncome. The human rights implications of the crisis are severe as every citizen of South Africa has the right to clean water and a clean environment. This water shortage infringes on those rights enshrined in the Constitution with specific reference to section 27(1)(b) and violates the dignity of all affected people.

The PSA has engaged the KZN Regional Commissioner of the DCS in writing, outlining the water shortage crisis and implications to the prison and calling for urgency in resolving this issue. The state as an employer is obliged in terms of provisions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993*, read together with *Hazardous Biological Agents Regulations*, to provide and maintain as far as reasonably practicable a safe working environment and without risks to health of employees and, in this case, inmates.

The PSA demands that the DCS, as a matter of utmost urgency, purchases a new water pump to remedy the situation. The PSA further appeals to the Regional Commissioner to ensure that this process is expedited by the Regional Head responsible for Supply Chain Management to avert an escalation of this crisis. The PSA is committed to pursue improved working conditions for public-sector employees and will continue to protect the rights of the Union's members.

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