

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	PSA disturbed by deteriorating OHS standards at Department of Military Veterans
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<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), as the majority Union representing employees at the Department of Military Veterans is disturbed by rapidly deteriorating occupational health and safety (OHS) standards at the Department.

The Department's management is oblivious to the wellbeing of employees. The PSA alerted the Department to the non-compliance with OHS standards, including leaking pipes and toilets, cracked walls, poor ventilation, open electric wires, and the lack of a compliance certificate. It is shocking that the Department sees nothing wrong housing employees in an unsafe building. Whilst the PSA was awaiting an inspection by the Department of Employment and Labour, members notified the Union of additional matters. These include flooding of the building when it rains, with water flowing into passageways, elevators, and some offices. In addition, water smell of sewage came from two blocked toilets on the third floor and dripped onto lower floors through the ceilings. The Department has failed to comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which provides that the employer must provide a workplace that is safe and without risk to employees.

The PSA condemns the Department's uncaring attitude towards its employees. The PSA's call on the Department to find alternative accommodation or to allow equipped employees to work from home were ignored. Engagement at the Departmental Bargaining Chamber did not assist as the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans failed to act despite being aware of the situation in the Department.

The Department has furthermore been in the news regarding financial misconduct and corruption, which highlighted issues such as circumvention of procurement processes, mismanagement of projects, and authorised expenditure. These governance failures undermine the Department's credibility and effectiveness, and its inability to main buildings is therefore not surprising. The PSA is therefore prepared to engage the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans for intervention.

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