

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA disturbed by pattern of fires at numerous government buildings over last five years
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely disturbed by the fire at Tembisa Hospital in Gauteng, which affected the building infrastructure and high-tech equipment, raising questions about the safety of hospitals and many government buildings.

Recently, Addington Hospital, Pelonomi Tertiary Hospital, George Mukhari Academic Hospital, and Charlotte Maxeke also experienced fires, which affected service delivery and caused major infrastructure damage. Apart from these hospitals, fires affected various other government buildings. Such incidents have cost government billions of Rands over the last three years. Repairs and renovations of affected buildings cause a burden on South Africa's compromised fiscus.

The series of fires that have ravaged several government buildings in recent years pose a threat to the safety of public servants and undermine the integrity of national institutions. Amongst many buildings affected by fires are the Parliament building, the Department of Health's headquarters, the Department of Home Affairs' building in Johannesburg, the Social Development Building in Durban, the Department of Education in Bloemfontein, the Department of Justice in Cape Town, and the Labour Department Building in Johannesburg.

The PSA urges the Department of Employment and Labour, together with the Department of Public Service and Administration, to conduct a training and awareness campaign regarding safety and security measures in government buildings. A safety audit of all government buildings must be conducted to identify those in need of urgent attention to proactively address challenges. Investigations must be done into the cause of the fire at Tembisa Hospital. The findings must be shared with the public and other facilities to ensure accountability and learning. Maintenance Managers should play a critical role of ensuring the safety of the infrastructure, assets, and people at all government buildings. In addition, the Department of Health must provide counselling to employees who might have been affected by the trauma of the fire.

The PSA further calls for the appointment of more labour inspectors as the Department of Employment and Labour is experiencing a staff shortage, which impact on the ability to conduct inspections at dilapidated and non-compliant buildings.

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