

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA forces closure of unsafe wards at Universitas Hospital, Free State**

**DATE**                                      4 June 2025

**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                              communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is dismayed to have been compelled to escalate long-standing health and safety concerns at Universitas Hospital in the Free State to the Department of Employment and Labour.

For the past two years, the Hospital's Wards 10A and 10B, both paediatric units, have been operating without warm water or any form of air conditioning. These conditions have rendered the wards unbearably hot in summer and cold in winter, putting the health and safety of patients and employees at serious risk. More recently, the situation worsened with a persistent water leakage in the wards, creating hazardous and unsanitary conditions.

Despite repeated efforts to engage Hospital management, no decisive action was taken to address these issues. The PSA was therefore left with no option but to refer the matter to the Department of Employment and Labour. Following an inspection by an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Inspector, a prohibition notice was issued, ordering the immediate closure of the affected wards. The Inspector confirmed that the conditions posed a significant health risk to employees and the public. The PSA had previously raised concerns about the lack of a fire escape in these wards, a matter also confirmed by the Inspector who instructed the evacuation of all patients and staff by 4 June 2025.

The PSA is committed to protecting the safety, dignity, and working conditions of public servants, as well as the well-being of the communities they serve. The PSA urges the Free State Department of Health to take urgent and decisive action to rectify these issues at the Hospital and ensure that the health and safety of healthcare workers and patients are not compromised.

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