

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA infuriated by allegations of abuse of workers at Sedibeng Special School in Limpopo
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged following a visit to Sedibeng Special School in Lephalale, Waterberg District under Ellisras Circuit, where it was found that workers are subjected to an abusive working environment.

The Limpopo Department of Education seems to be taking advantage of the high unemployment rate in the province. Employees are forced to work under these circumstances for the sake of employed, especially noting their education level and skills. Employees at the school are treated with disrespect, with their voices not being recognised. They expected to comply or leave, with the Department being aware that the option to leave is near impossible.

The PSA was shocked to learn that a school with 500 learners with special needs has only six support staff members. It is unthinkable for the Department to expect one person to cook for 500 learners, two cleaners to clean the entire school, including hostels, and to do laundry for learners. There is further only one maintenance officer and one house father and mother who look after 38 and 28 learners, respectively. The maintenance officer is also expected to assist with driving as the school does not have driver. The house father and mother are expected to bath 38 and 28 learners every morning and to accompany them to the kitchen for breakfast before taking them to their classes.

In addition, these employees are denied leave. They work over weekends and can only get four days off per month, which is a direct violation of the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act*. The scheduling of employees' activities must consider the legal framework and their personal circumstances, which is not the case with shifts at Sedibeng Special School. Employees are expected to work day and night, weekends, and even on holidays without rest, even during school holidays. There is no one to relieve them during sick or bereavement leave as the Department is pleading poverty and cannot employ additional staff.

The PSA calls on the Limpopo MEC of Education to urgently address the plight of these vulnerable employees. Failure to fill positions to ensure that adequate human resources are available to provide much needed and professional service delivery is the source of all these problems. The PSA will not hesitate to approach the Office of the Public Service Commission, the Department of Employment and Labour, as well as South African Human Rights Commission to address this abuse of employees.

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