

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA outraged by Gauteng Department of Social Development's insensitive response amidst increase in hijacking incidents involving workers
DATE	25 June 2026
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed by escalating violent hijackings of Social Workers and the shocking lack of support by the Gauteng Department of Social Development.

Social Workers provide essential services to vulnerable communities under increasingly dangerous conditions. Instead of implementing urgent safety measures, the Department's management has responded with gross insensitivity and a dismissive attitude toward staff trauma. Following a recent traumatising hijacking incident, a senior manager of the Department reportedly informed staff members during a meeting at Mamelodi Charity that they must simply continue with their duties because "that incident can even happen at your home".

Compounding this reckless attitude, the Department has failed to provide proper psychological counselling to the traumatised victims, leaving them to process severe workplace violence on their own. The PSA strongly condemns this treatment. Normalising violent crime and equating a targeted workplace hazard with home safety is an insult to traumatised employees. This attitude demonstrates a severe failure of leadership and a clear violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which requires employers to provide a safe and supportive working environment.

The PSA will pursue the Union's mandate of protecting the rights and interests of public servants. Social Workers cannot be expected to deliver critical psychosocial services whilst fearing for their lives and being neglected by their employer.

The PSA demands an immediate retraction of the insensitive statements, a formal apology, and urgent rollout of physical security escorts, vehicle tracking systems, and immediate, professional counselling services for all affected staff. The PSA will not sit idly by whilst the lives of the Union's members are compromised by bureaucratic indifference.

END