

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA supports North West campaign to end illegal initiation schools and protect young lives
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) supports the North West Provincial Initiation Coordinating Committee (PICC) and the National Initiation Oversight Committee (NIOC) in their critical awareness campaign on the *Customary Initiation Act (Act 2 of 2021)*.

The PSA condemns the reckless and unlawful operation of illegal initiation schools that continue to claim young lives and put communities at risk. The recent winter season in North West exposed the deadly consequences of unregulated initiation schools. Six young initiates died, and over 100 were rescued from unsafe conditions involving abuse, dehydration, and unhygienic practices. These tragedies are preventable. The PSA calls for zero tolerance for illegal schools and emphasises the urgent need for strict enforcement of the law, full registration of schools, and accountability for those responsible.

The PSA demands that traditional leaders, parents, and school principals ensure absolute compliance with the *Customary Initiation Act*. Initiates' rights must be fully respected, including adherence to age restrictions, parental consent, and medical and safety standards. Violators must face the full force of the law, including fines and imprisonment, to deter exploitation of this sacred cultural rite.

Community education and awareness campaigns are critical. Families and local authorities must be empowered to identify and report illegal schools immediately. Past PICC interventions, such as the June 2025 rescue of 67 boys, prove that proactive monitoring works. Stronger, coordinated action is, however, urgently needed to eliminate illegal initiation schools.

The PSA applauds the leadership and courage of the North West PICC, NIOC, and all stakeholders committed to protecting young South Africans. The PSA urges relentless enforcement, immediate action against offenders, and continuous education to ensure no more lives are lost. Safety, legality, and respect for culture must guide all initiation practices.

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