

MEDIA RELEASE

COVID-19: PSA troubled by burglaries and vandalism at schools during lockdown

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The Public Servants Association of SA (PSA) that represents more than 240 000 Public Sector employees is troubled about burglaries and vandalism at more than 180 schools across the country during the COVID-19 lockdown period that are set to impact negatively on educators and learners.

The South African public schooling system is under immense pressure to conclude the 2020-school year following the early closure and the national lockdown that were implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19. The country already has challenges to access education limited by numerous factors, including overcrowding, lack of learning material, running water and toilets to mention a few. The PSA regards the spate of attacks on schools as violence intentionally targeting civilians and these must be treated as acts of terrorism. Apprehended criminals must be charged and convicted as terrorists. The conviction of such apprehended criminals must also be prioritised by courts to send a stern and clear message to all to refrain from any criminal activity, especially in the school environment.

The universal declaration and human rights make it clear that every child has the right to free basic education and criminality targeting schools cannot be tolerated as its further disadvantages vulnerable communities meant to educate children that can assist to alleviate poverty. The PSA calls on communities to identify the criminals and report them to the authorities. These criminals' actions are depriving youths of their right to education and is condemned in the strongest terms. It is unfortunate that during an unprecedented national crisis, the PSA must call on the Minister of Basic Education to increase security at schools located in high-risk areas.

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