

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA warns of deepening mental health and GBVF crisis following murder-suicide involving SAPS member in Mpumalanga
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked and saddened following a tragic murder-suicide involving a South African Police Service (SAPS) Captain attached to Bethal Police Station in Mpumalanga.

This devastating incident, which occurred in Grootvlei in the Gert Sibande Region, once again laid bare the brutal reality of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) as well as the growing mental-health crisis affecting communities and public institutions.

The PSA extends condolences to the bereaved families, colleagues, and all those affected by this tragedy. The PSA also cautions against treating this as an isolated incident. It is a deeply disturbing signal that the GBVF crisis has penetrated even institutions that are expected to protect society from violence and lawlessness.

The PSA supports the Presidency's recognition of GBVF as a national crisis. Declarations without decisive intervention, professional support systems, and adequate resources will, however, not change the realities faced by workers and communities. Police officers are not immune to social pressures, trauma, family instability, and psychological strain affecting the broader society. In fact, the nature of policing often intensifies these burdens through repeated exposure to violence, death, conflict, and emotional distress. This tragedy underscores the urgent need to recognise that mental-health support in law enforcement is an institutional necessity.

The PSA therefore calls for the immediate strengthening and full capacity of employee health and wellness (EHW) units in the SAPS. This must include urgent deployment of specialised professionals such as psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and social workers to ensure that members have access to credible, confidential, and responsive mental health support before distress escalates into catastrophe. The PSA further calls on the SAPS provincial and national management to urgently conduct a full assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of current EHW services and ensure immediate access to professional and confidential mental-health support for employees in distress. Intensifying specialised training on GBVF, trauma management, behavioural warning signs, and early intervention is required. Workplace systems must be strengthened to identify at-risk employees and intervene proactively.

Employee wellness should be treated as a strategic operational priority central to public safety and institutional stability. A traumatised workforce cannot be expected to deliver effective public safety services whilst its own psychological well-being is neglected. Protecting those who protect the public must be treated as a core governance responsibility.



This incident must serve as a turning point as GBVF is not only a criminal justice issue. It is also a workplace, mental-health, and societal crisis. The response must therefore be urgent, coordinated, and adequately resourced.

The PSA is steadfast in the Union's support for law enforcement officials and their families and will continue to hold provincial and national authorities accountable for preserving the dignity, well-being, and lives of public servants.

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