

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA welcomes intervention by Msunduzi Municipality leadership collecting refuse following strike by Waste Pickers in Pietermaritzburg
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the intervention by the Msunduzi Municipality in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, to start a clean-up campaign in efforts to remove uncollected refuse in the city, after contract workers were involved in an illegal strike.

The clean-up campaign was led by the Mayor of Msunduzi Municipality, his deputy, ward councillors, and volunteers in effort to clean up the inner city and catch up on the backlog as refuse has not been collected for over a week. The clean-up campaign also focused on key areas, especially those that are near clinics and schools. The strike began last week Friday. The waste pickers were aggrieved about a lack of personal protective equipment and the Municipality failing to absorb them as permanent workers.

Uncollected refuse in municipalities poses significant risks to public health, safety, and the environment. The negative consequences of uncollected refuse includes pollution, harming the soil, water, and air. Refuse can attract pests such as rats, insects, and spread diseases. It can cause damage to property and causes an unpleasant odour. Uncollected refuse can further cause fire hazards, particularly if it is flammable or contains hazardous materials.

The PSA is concerned about the uncollected waste as it infringes on the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. According to the South African Constitution everyone has the right to live in an environment that does not harm their health or well-being. The PSA is concerned about the Municipality failing to address workers' concerns timeously. These concerns must be resolved. The Municipality further needs to ensure that sure enough personal protective equipment is supplied to all workers.

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