

MEDIA RELEASE Youth Day: PSA calls on Government to protect 2020 youth and beyond

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The central issues behind the struggle of the student and youth generation, of the 1970s and 1980s, were the right to accessible, free, and quality education for everyone from Primary to Tertiary education. As well as the equal recognition and development of all languages, without elevating one language above the others. On the anniversary of the national students' uprising of 16 June 1976, which is the country's national Youth Day, the Public Servants Association (PSA), appeals to the government and civil society to take the right to education and youth development as one of the priority areas of South Africa's development agenda. The PSA takes this moment to recommit itself to contribute to youth development initiatives within the union and in broader society and to the protection of the rights of learners, educators and all workers in the public sector.

The PSA further calls on government to protect the youth of 2020 and review its stance on the inconsiderate reopening of schools. Many young South Africans are currently sitting in limbo regarding their education, as they are not as privileged as their peers in developed areas, where other children could simply continue with school, leaving others behind. The Department of Basic Education has forced the re-opening of schools, despite warnings by parents, including the PSA, who conducted inspections throughout the country, on the state of readiness for learning to continue. The PSA has been shocked at what was found, including no water and sanitation, no Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs'), classrooms that have not been deep-cleaned, no sanitisers; the list goes on. The PSA remains baffled on the insistence of the department to re-open schools when they have failed to improve school infrastructure over the past 26 years. On top of the already existing problems faced by learners, they are already teachers and learners infected by the coronavirus.

Whilst we also in the youth month, the PSA is worried about the escalation of femicide where in the past week we have witnessed multiple monstrous murder of young women by their partners and we are not going to rest in putting pressure on the Government to go out and get those perpetrators who doesn't deserve to live amongst our society. The PSA reiterate its position against government wrong decision to release 19 000 prisoners sends a wrong message to potential criminals that despite the conviction on crime, there are other possibilities to get back to the society without serving time to conclude rehabilitation.

The PSA demands progress report post the march by women last year as well as how going forward the government will ensure protection of women and children. It is important to get both the Ministry of Women, children and People living with disabilities working with the Department of Police and Social Development to provide us with real statistics on femicide, including an action plan on how to scale down this scourge.

The PSA call on communities, more particularly parents not to hide monsters in their homes, but immediately expose the perpetrators as these criminals are amongst us. Communities must also play their role to report any form of violence, abuse or rape irrespective of the relations between the victim and the perpetrator. Women, children and People leaving with disabilities cannot be easy target for GBV but instead they need more support from government and their respective communities.



This Youth Day, there will be no marches, limited celebrations, and commemorations, to remember those who sacrificed for others to succeed. It is vital at this point, to not forget the class of 76', for many of the country's youth a decent and fair education for every child despite the background, lastly, the PSA says no to killing of women and children.

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