

Update: Stabbing of Correctional Officer at St Albans Correctional Centre, Port Elizabeth

The PSA is extremely concerned about the number of officials at the St Albans Correctional Center who have been assaulted and even stabbed with knives and sharp objects. On Sunday, 1 September 2019, another member was stabbed in St Albans Medium B Correctional Centre. This is the third incident in a matter of days at this Centre.

The members involved in the incident were also not provided with any counselling and were expected to return to work on Monday, 2 September 2019. The PSA ascribes this volatile situation to the implementation of the seven-day work week to save costs on overtime payments. This shift system has resulted in a situation where at any given time there are less than 50% of officials on duty in correctional centers that are overcrowded.

The DCS admitted before the Portfolio Committee that it required an additional 23 000 employees to successfully implement the seven-day work week. This situation was raised with DCS at all levels and was even escalated to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee that visited St Albans. The situation, however, persists with no improvement and no remedial systems in place.

On 3 September 2019, an urgent meeting was called between, the National, Provincial and Area Commissioners of the DCS at St Albans. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for 4 September 2019 that will be attended by the PSA.

The PSA advises members to put safety first and to not unlock any cells unless enough staff members are available. Members are further advised to adopt the buddy system, which entails moving around the centre with a colleague. Members who are assaulted in any manner are advised to lay criminal charges against the Area, Provincial and National Commissioners of the DCS. Members are assured that the PSA is doing everything possible to ensure the safety of members.

Members will be informed on the outcome of the meetings with DCS management.

Ivan Fredericks
GENERAL MANAGER