FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT – EASTERN CAPE

30-04-2020

Update: Members at Port Elizabeth Magistrate's offices

The PSA is disturbed about reported non-compliance with COVID-19 Regulations and the Department of Employment and Labour's Guidelines to ensure safe and healthy work practices for employees at the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development's Port Elizabeth Magistrate's offices.

The Department, as custodian of constitutional values and human rights, should not make itself guilty of violating the rights of its employees by subjecting them to dangerous and unsafe working conditions. The Department, despite endeavouring to provide justice for all in South Africa, seems to be excluding its own employees in Port Elizabeth by not providing them with personal protective equipment (PPE) to limit exposure to COVID-19 infection. In addition, the following non-compliance issues prevail:

- To date, the passage to the offices was not washed or disinfected.
- Offices are not disinfected.
- Toilets are not disinfected or cleaned, while being used by multiple individuals.
- Main passages are not cleaned or disinfected.
- The stairs leading to the cells, magistrate's parking, etc. are not cleaned or disinfected on a regular basis. Staff use these stairs as a shorter route daily.

Despite the increasing rate of infection reported by the Department of Health, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development seems to be oblivious of the danger its employees are exposed to. In addition, section 8 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* places an obligation on all employers to provide and maintain a workplace that is safe and without risk to the health of employees.

The PSA's interventions at local level have failed to resolve the problem and the Union therefore calls upon the Accounting Officer of the Department to intervene and ensure immediate compliance. Should this matter not be resolved, the PSA will be forced to explore the options to protect members' rights.

GENERAL MANAGER