

Victimisation of PSA shop stewards at schools

The PSA was alerted to the victimisation and disrespect of PSA shop stewards at schools by members of other unions who also happen to be officials in managerial positions at schools. Some shop stewards are threatened with disciplinary process for raising concerns regarding non-compliance with COVID-19 protocols. It was shocking that some principals incorrectly use section 33A of the *South African Schools Act (SASA)*, which prohibits political activities during school time whereas the PSA is not a political party but a recognised trade union with full organisational rights.

PSA shop stewards are labelled as trouble makers and intimidated, This threatens their safety as some employees may take it too far, particularly in the midst of instigation of violence by principals who want to act as gatekeepers against the PSA.

As a recognised Union at the PSCBC, the PSA has subsequently organisational rights across all Sectoral Bargaining Chambers, i.e. ELRC, SSSBC and GPSSBC and the victimisation defies logic. Principals must act within the scope of legislative framework and as representatives of the Department/employer at school level, they are expected and required by law to be impartial in all their dealings. Employees have the right to associate with the PSA and principals cannot deny them this enshrined right and must respect members' choice in this regard. COVID-19 cannot be used as an excuse to suppress the PSA and deny it exercising its organisational rights, isolate those aligned with the PSA and instigating violence against them. The Office of the MEC was engaged and an outcome is awaited.

The PSA urges educators who are members of the PSA to stand firm and not allow any form of intimidation to deter them for exercising their constitutional rights. Employees who want to join the PSA or report challenges are urged to contact the PSA ELRC Provincial Chairperson, Sebothoma, at sebomcs@gmail.com or the Secretary, Matlala, at bophelobyannete@gmail.com. Alternatively, members can call the PSA Provincial Office on (015) 295 0500. Members will be updated on developments.

GENERAL MANAGER