

FOR PSA MEMBERS: **DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY VETERANS (DMV)**

27-03-2023

## PSA concerned about safety of members after they were prevented from leaving workplace

The PSA was alerted by frantic employees who were prevented from leaving the building by disgruntled military veterans and their families on Wednesday, 22 March 2023. The workers were concerned about their safety when being confronted by a group of people wearing military combat uniforms, singing struggle songs, and brandishing placards and posters. Members reported that they were prevented from leaving through the only main gate by these military veterans even for obtaining food or other departmental errands.

The PSA went to the DMV in Pretoria with the intention of negotiating with the employer to release employees who were obviously under duress as the building was sealed off by military veterans. On arrival at the DMV, it was noted that Military Police and SAPS were already on the scene and an impression was created that they would be able to control the situation. The PSA then joined a management meeting with shop stewards to plead for the release of all staff members. It was clear that management was divided in taking a decision whether employees should be released or not and claimed not to have authority to do so. The PSA reminded the employer that in terms of section 8 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the employer is obliged to provide an environment that is safe and free from hazards to its employees.

The PSA then demanded that management should go to the Protection Services at the main entrance and request them to provide a free passage for all employees who felt threatened and wished to leave. When management could not heed that call, the PSA approached the SAPS to provide a free passage to employees. This was refused, claiming that the military veterans' grievances were genuine and should be attended to. The behaviour by the SAPS is condemned as they prioritised the grievances of military veterans over the safety of workers. The PSA stressed the fact that as much as they are supporting the cause of the veterans to fight for their rights and receive their promised benefits, it is not acceptable that members' right of movement is infringed. The PSA then, on behalf of employees, negotiated with the military veterans and advised them that management would engage them in the boardroom, and that they would be given a media platform to air their concerns to journalists. After much deliberation, the disgruntled military veterans became less hostile and granted free passage to all employees who wanted to leave. The PSA will continue to monitor the situation.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website ([www.psa.co.za](http://www.psa.co.za)), send an email to [ask@psa.co.za](mailto:ask@psa.co.za), or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

GENERAL MANAGER