

Feedback: Bilateral meeting with employer – 26 January 2024

Members are aware of the allegation against the Limpopo Department of Health senior manager of sexual harassment. It is alleged that a manager uses his position to obtain sexual favours from countless unsuspecting victims. These offences are alleged to have taken place at two hospitals where the said manager was working. The PSA addressed a letter to the employer, demanding that the manager be suspended, and the matter be investigated as such abuse of power and abuse of women in the workplace cannot be tolerated.

Subsequently, the acting Head of Department (HOD) arranged a meeting with the PSA on 26 January 2024 to discuss the said letter. The meeting was attended by the acting HOD, Labour Office and the Deputy Director General (DDG): Corporate Services who attended virtually. The employer reported that upon discovering the article in the *Limpopo Justice House* and the allegation letter that was widely circulated, it engaged with the said manager who disputed all allegations. The Department also conducted its own investigation, which led it an individual suspected to be behind the letter or the accusation. The Department addressed a letter to the individual on 22 December 2023 but is yet to receive acknowledgement or a response. The Department is thus not able to suspend the accused employee without *prima facie* evidence.

The PSA accepted the employer's explanation whilst pointing out the difficulty of employees coming forward with this kind of information and noting that the accused is a senior manager. Although whistleblowers do not seem to enjoy much protection, the PSA advises members who suffered at the hand of the manager to report the matter to the Department through the MEC if not confident to do so via the acting HOD, Office of the Premier, Public Protector or Office of the Public Service Commission. Failure to report this matter perpetuates the abuse of power and women and silence is not an option. No woman must suffer at the hand of a person who misuses his position to abuse women without consequence. The PSA will not hesitate to revert to the employer if furnished with tangible evidence and urges all employees to refuse to be abused, even if promised promotions or any form of benefits.

Employees who wish to join the PSA should contact Paulina Moloto (082 880 8957), Lawrence Muvhango (082 880 8995), or the PSA Provincial Office on (015) 295 0500.

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GENERAL MANAGER