



NPSWU CONDEMNS THE HUMILIATION AND ABUSE OF COMMUNITY CARE WORKERS AT MAKHWELA CLINIC

PRESS STATEMENT – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday November 18, 2025

The National Public Service Workers Union (NPSWU) strongly condemns the shocking and dehumanising treatment of our members at Makhwela Clinic on Wednesday, 12 November 2025, following unlawful actions by the Operations Manager, Ms. O.T. Fakude.

According to reports received from our members, Ms. Fakude accused a group of Community Care Givers (CCGs) of stealing R200 and instructed security personnel to conduct invasive and degrading searches. A male security guard was first ordered to search the women, a clear violation of protocol and basic human dignity. When he refused, Ms. Fakude allegedly brought in a female guard and instructed her to strip-search the workers, forcing them to remove their clothing in a room with open windows and exposing them to the public and stripping them of their dignity. No money or wrongdoing was found from searches.

Our members further reported that Ms. Fakude instructed security to inspect their private parts, including their buttocks, an action they rightly refused due to its humiliating and unlawful nature. These are married women, mothers, and respected community workers who were treated like criminals without any evidence.

This degrading act was witnessed by a clinic client, who then alerted the Vryheid community, resulting in public outrage and rising pressure for accountability.

NPSWU General Secretary was immediately alerted, and the union has since taken up the matter formally. Our members are traumatised and unable to work due to fear, humiliation, and emotional distress.

The conduct displayed by the Operations Manager is a gross violation of human rights, the Labour Relations Act, and the Code of Good Practice. Strip-searching employees, especially without evidence and without lawful authority is illegal, unethical, and unacceptable.

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NPSWU calls for the following:

- Immediate suspension of Ms. O.T. Fakude pending a full investigation.
- Urgent intervention from the Department of Health to restore safety and dignity at Makhwela Clinic.

NPSWU will be taking this matter forward legally to protect the rights of our members and ensure justice is served. No worker should be subjected to such humiliation under any circumstances. We acknowledge and appreciate the Vryheid community for standing with the workers. Abuse of power in public healthcare facilities must be confronted, and we welcome their support in demanding accountability.

Media interviews and further details are available through the Office of the General Secretary.

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