

# Court staff told to sweat it out

## INGRID OELLMANN

KWAZULU-NATAL'S director of public prosecutions issued a directive to staff members yesterday warning them against embarking on a "go-slow" due to problems with the airconditioning system at court.

This followed a petition presented by some court officials and lawyers stating that they had decided not to work in court after 11 am due to the air conditioners not working.

Meanwhile, a source at court said yesterday that a contractor who had been working on their airconditioning system at the magistrate's court on Monday, did not turn up yesterday. While some airconditioners in the building were reportedly working, others were still not fixed.

In a directive to her staff, KZN DPP Sophy Noko said as much as an employer is required to provide good working conditions in terms of the Basic

Conditions of Employment Act, it was not justified that officials decided to down tools or embark on a go-slow. "As the criminal justice system officials we render essential services that we can never down tools for or go slow on," she said.

She added that there were proper processes and procedures to be followed including "occupational health processes" and said petitions and go-slows are "definitely not some of these processes".

She said 11 am was "not a finishing time for court or offices" in KZN, adding that the Department of Justice has reported that they had already dispatched technicians through the Department of Public Works to work on the air conditioners.

Court officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said their health is being compromised by the stuffy conditions and extreme heat in crowded courtrooms.