

UPDATE: Civitas frustrations over 'empty promises'

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1 day ago



Civitas building ordered shut last year due to health and safety concerns. Photo: Reitumetse Mahope

[National health department](#) employees have resumed daily protests outside the Civitas building in the Pretoria CBD last week Friday.

The protests continued throughout the following week.

Protesters said they were unhappy about conditions at the building and that the department was dragging its feet in finding new accommodation for them.

“We still have problems with the air conditioning system, water leaks and fire-fighting equipment in the building,” said national health department [Nehawu](#) chairperson Lusizo Ratya.

The latest protests follow several protests since April last year over the alleged health and safety conditions at the building in the Pretoria CBD.

In February, health minister Aaron Motsoaledi agreed with his employees that a new headquarters was needed.

“We have also complained about the building’s security systems being dead,” said Ratya.

He said the building had major health and safety issues and was not suitable for people to work in it.

“We have asked for an alternative building and a search for a safer building started, but nothing has been presented to us as a potential alternative.

“This means the department is not fast-tracking the process and various other departments are also not playing their roles.

“Employees are furious with management being so slow.”

He said construction was also taking place in Civitas while employees were still in the building.

“This is frustrating. The dust is affecting employees. Management has never held a meeting with us to inform us about the construction,” he said.

Ratya said the building flooded during recent rains two weeks ago, which proved it was not safe.

“There was serious flooding in the building because the building had multiple cracks. The roof could also collapse at any moment.

“An employee could have a roof collapse on them while at his or her desk.”

He said during the flooding, live electricity wires were exposed to water.

Ratya said since the minister was unresponsive to their demands, employees were hoping the demonstration would force The Presidency to intervene.

Health department spokesperson Popo Maja said he could not comment on this matter.

“Only the minister can reply on this matter.”

In a statement in February, Maja said the department had brought in engineers and other technical experts to inspect Civitas for safety.

“Numerous meetings took place between organised employees, the departments of labour, health and public works,” Maja said.