

Civitas building dispute still not resolved

Unhappy health department staff say health minister is not addressing their concerns and must be replaced.

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National health department staff are urging Luthuli House to appoint a new boss “able to deal with their concerns”.

“Aaron Motsoaledi knows he is on his way out and he would like to leave this mess with whoever will replace him,” said national health department Nehawu chairperson, Lusizo Ratya.

Ratya said they were counting on The Presidency to bring in a new minister who could deal with their problems at the Civitas building.

“We are eagerly waiting to see who will be sent and put in place to x the house.

“The message we are giving him or her is to note that the employees are waiting outside ... because it is clear that Civitas is un xable.”

Ratya said this was proven in their seven-month wait for the health department to x the building.

The employees’ plea comes after they resumed their daily protest outside the building in Pretoria on Tuesday.

The protest has continued nonstop for almost two weeks.

They had rst protested in April last year over the alleged health and safety concerns at the building, and alleged that the department was dragging its feet in nding new accommodation for them.

“We still have problems with the air-conditioning system, water leaks and re-ghting equipment in the building,” said Ratya.

In February, Motsoaledi agreed with his employees that new headquarters were 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



Employees protest outside the Civitas building over health and safety concerns.

to work in.

“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 the building while employees were working.

“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 ooded during the last heavy rains “because the building had multiple cracks and the roof could collapse on an employee while at their desk at any moment”.

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

Ratya said since the minister was

unresponsive to their demands, they were hoping the demonstration would force The Presidency to intervene.

Last week, health department spokesperson Popo Maja said he could not comment on the matter; that only the minister could.

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

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