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Popcru shuts Makhanda police station, vows to close others in province

Herald Reporter

The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru) in the Eastern Cape closed the dilapidated Makhanda police station on Wednesday and vowed to shut others across the province.

Popcru regional secretary Xolani Prusente said the union decided to close the station as its dilapidated state posed both a physical danger and health hazard to police members.

However, police spokesperson Lieutenant-Colonel Siphokazi Mawisa said service delivery was not affected by the temporary closure and the police station had been operating smoothly since.

"Renovations meant to restore this station began as far back as 2021, yet the appointed contractor disgracefully abandoned the project midway through 2024, leaving behind a skeleton structure where doors and windows remain open, where there is no running water and where members are expected to function without ablution facilities," Prusente said.

"This has turned what is supposed to be a centre of service into a health hazard, exposing workers to disease and stripping them of the most basic workplace rights."

Prusente said the union would embark on a province-wide programme to close several other police stations with hazardous work environments.

"Popcru will not allow this situation to continue," he said.

"We have taken the bold step of shutting down the

Makhanda police station, and we declare today [Wednesday] that this is only the beginning.

"We will embark on a rolling programme of shut-downs across the Eastern Cape, targeting every police station that endangers the lives of workers and the public."

He said in Beacon Bay, police had been forced to operate out of a container after the labour department condemned the police station building.

In Ngqamakhwe, police were working from prefabricated structures after several issues with contractors.

"This is not just an unfortunate lapse — it is a reflection of the wider decay and indifference that has come to define SAPS infrastructure in our province.

"Instead of taking responsibility, SAPS in Makhanda has the audacity to direct our union to their head office, as though the suffering of workers is a bureaucratic inconvenience," Prusente said.

Mawisa said the SAPS was aware of the conditions at the Makhanda police station.

"The premises is under renovation, which is being handled by the department of public works and infrastructure.

"Secondly, the Makana Local Municipality is facing a water challenge, which is also affecting the provision of water at the police station.

"However, the SA Police Service activated a contingency plan to provide water for its employees and clients through the use of water tanks."