



# NATIONAL NEWS FLASH



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## STOP THE VIOLENCE AND LOOTING!!!

NAPTOSA condemns the wave of violence and looting that is currently gripping our country.

As a union we naturally support the constitutional right to peacefully and unarmed, assemble, demonstrate, picket and present petitions. When, however, this fundamental right is abused, leading to the destruction of property, compromising food security, affecting the health and welfare of citizens, and ultimately deaths, we believe that the right is forfeited by those involved and that the full might of the state machinery should be employed against the perpetrators.

The sad part of the current situation is the impact that it already has, but in the long run will have, on the poor and the vulnerable in society. Think of the those that are dependent on social security pay-outs that had to be halted as a result of the violence and what will become of them when basic foodstuffs run out.

For this criminality to hit our country at a time when we are already reeling under the effects of the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is simply atrocious. Jeopardising the vaccination process is about as criminal as the violence and looting itself. Hospitals in the effected areas now have to treat people injured in the protest action, thereby taking away resources that had to be applied in the treatment of COVID patients.

It was also disturbing to learn that education yet again fell victim to protest action with a number of schools having been burned or vandalised. As if the pandemic itself has not played havoc with the psychological conditions of learners and teachers, this added pressure and fear of schools under attack is the last thing we need.

We realise that many of our members, especially those in the affected areas, are fearful, despondent and angry. We nevertheless urge members to remain calm and to be mindful not to take matters into their own hands. Please also do not, wittingly or unwittingly, participate in the spreading of false information on the current situation.

As NAPTOSA we call on government to bring the situation speedily under control to prevent further loss of life and further devastation to our fragile economy. We appeal to government to use all the resources at its disposal to restore law and order, while at the same time protecting the rights of citizens, lawfully exercised.

We trust that our members will be safe from both the protest action and the pandemic and that we will be able to return to a normalised situation soon.

**BASIL MANUEL**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**