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# NAPTOSA

National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa

## STATEMENT BY NAPTOSA ON VANDALISM OF SCHOOLS DURING LOCKDOWN

When apprehended, and we urge the Minister of Police to leave no stone unturned to apprehend every single individual that has been responsible for the vandalism of schools during this lockdown period, the charges will probably be burglary, theft, damage to property and the like. But NAPTOSA says this is tantamount to **treason**.

Considering the definition of treason, we see that it is “the crime of betraying one's country, especially by attempting to kill or overthrow the sovereign or government”. And that is exactly what the destruction of schools and school property boils down to. It is a betrayal of our country and an attempt to kill the future of children who is to become the future leaders of our government. In fact, it could be viewed as a premature attempt to overthrow our future government and is a direct attack on our Constitution.

The Constitution guarantees the right of everyone to basic education and further provides that the rights of the child are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. Actions to undermine these rights cannot be tolerated by any society.

We therefore trust that the Department of Justice will pull out all stops to obtain the maximum sentences for those found guilty of this despicable crime and to consider legislation that will deal with this crime specifically and will allow the imposition of most harsh sentences.

To have 397 schools vandalised in a period of only two weeks of lockdown is a travesty. And we have only just entered the next 2 weeks of lockdown. Whilst NAPTOSA supports the Minister of Basic Education and the Department (DBE) in condemning these crimes and saying that it will negatively affect the recovery plan post lockdown, we don't have to be politically mindful and can therefore call these perpetrators what they really are – cowards, robbers of children, under miners of the community, unworthy citizens.

Really, to vandalise an unprotected property that is of national importance to the future of our children, during a national, and international, crisis, must be the lowest form of cowardice. That criminal elements in our communities could destroy the infrastructure of their own children with such apparent impunity is incomprehensible.

NAPTOSA would like to appeal to members of the community to take ownership of their schools, declare war against criminals who are targeting schools and to support the DBE and police in exposing these criminals.

**B.L. MANUEL**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**