



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **DWS issues a dam safety directive to Senteeko Dam owner in Mpumalanga**

**04 February 2026**

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has issued a dam safety directive to address serious and ongoing safety risks at My Own Dam (publicly known as Senteeko Dam) in Mpumalanga. The directive, issued in terms of Section 118 of the National Water Act, was served on the dam owner, Shamile CPA, on Tuesday, 03 February 2025, and requires immediate, time-bound action to stabilise the dam and prevent further deterioration in order to protect lives, livelihoods and property downstream.

This intervention follows ongoing technical assessments which confirmed that the dam is still in a compromised and partially failed condition, and that without urgent remedial action, further deterioration is likely to continue. As outlined in the directive, these conditions pose an unacceptable level of risk that cannot be adequately managed through monitoring alone. The Department is therefore acting decisively to ensure that the dam owner fulfils their legal responsibility to maintain the dam in a safe condition.

The implications of inaction are significant as continued deterioration of the dam poses a direct threat to downstream farming communities, including the potential loss of life, damage to homes and infrastructure. These risks are heightened during periods of rainfall and cannot be ignored or deferred. For this reason, the Department is clear that the risk associated with the Senteeko Dam has not yet been averted, and regulatory enforcement will remain in place until that risk is meaningfully reduced.

While water levels in the dam have dropped, the reduction has not been sufficient to eliminate the risk of failure. Engineers have consciously avoided lowering the water level too rapidly, as this could trigger a rapid drawdown failure of the already compromised dam structure, which would significantly worsen the situation.

To address the prevailing risk, the Department has directed the dam owner's Appointed Professional Engineer (APP) to urgently assess the condition of the dam and determine the specific remedial measures required to prevent further deterioration and reduce the risk of failure. These determinations must be completed within seven (7) days from the date of the directive and submitted to the Department's Dam Safety Office for review and approval.

Once the proposed measures are approved, the Department will require the dam owner to immediately commence urgent repair works, including the appointment of

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a competent and suitably qualified contractor. All repair works must be carried out under the supervision of the APP and continue until the Department is satisfied that the dam no longer poses an unacceptable risk to downstream communities.

The Department expects all required engineering designs and technical submissions to be received on or before 13 February 2026, in strict accordance with the timelines set out in the directive. Failure to comply with these instructions will result in further enforcement action, as provided for by the law.

The Department will prioritise all necessary regulatory approvals to ensure that corrective work proceeds without delay. Protecting human life, property, and livelihoods downstream of the Senteeko Dam remains the Department's foremost concern. The Department will continue to closely monitor the situation and provide updates as developments occur.

**END**

**Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation**

**For more information contact: DWS Media Liaison Director Mavasa Wisane on 060 561 8935**

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