

Unions draw line in the sand over public sector wage bill

ENCA - 5 Nov 2019

Unions draw line in the sand over public sector wage bill Tuesday 5 November 2019 - 7:06am Trade unions say they won't be bullied, this after Finance Minister Tito Mboweni announced that government will be taking measures to reduce the public sector wage bill and to cap salary hikes, which were above the inflation rate last year. Courtesy #DStv403 JOHANNESBURG - Unions are taking a hard line with government, with some saying they won't help to reduce the public sector wage bill. At 35 percent of GDP, South Africa's wage bill is said to be unsustainable. Labour says it's not responsible for the economic mess the country's finding itself in. Instead, some workers want government to admit being guilty for mismanaging its finances and for adopting policies not suitable to South Africa. Finance Minister Tito Mboweni announced some spending cuts of around R49.5-billion over two years. Government hopes to avoid retrenchments and that unions will come to the table. The Public Servants Association is happy to come on board, on one condition. "We need admission of guilt so that we can be given an opportunity to forgive and it's our choice to forgive. "If they are not going to apologise they must deal with the consequences," said PSA Deputy General Manager Tahir Maepa. Labour federation Cosatu says it will go into negotiations with an open mind but won't be held to ransom. "We are not the architects of this mess, let's talk about the NDP, Cosatu opposed that document but it was rammed through by National Treasury, Cosatu cannot take responsibility for the economic mess we are in," said Cosatu spokesperson Sizwe Pamla. Meanwhile, federation Saftu is remaining firm. "We need to protect the living conditions of the public servants, that's going to be the attitude of the Saftu unions, protect the living conditions, protect the living standards, protect the wages," said Saftu General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi. Source eNCA Related News