

SA public service union says wage talks at tax agency 'seriously hampered'

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JOHANNESBURG, February 25 (ANA) - The Public Servants Association on Monday slammed what it called government attempts to blame the country's financial woes on the public wage bill despite revelations of corrupt activities by senior officials during various inquiries.

The PSA said wage negotiations at the South African Revenue Service (SARS) had been seriously hampered as a result.

"The effects of mismanagement of finances and human resources, not only at state-owned enterprises (SOEs) but also at SARS are blatantly apparent as the PSA continues to engage SARS to negotiate fair wages and improvement

in the working conditions for employees," PSA general manager Ivan Fredericks said.

"Whilst SARS has been filling posts in top management, employees who must ensure service delivery are negatively impacted by under-staffing, heavy workloads and uncertainty surrounding the wage negotiations."

He said a large number of resignations had left the revenue service currently employing 12,000 people from 13,900 in 2014/15. However, the number of senior management positions had increased over the same period, added Fredericks.

"As the country attempts to recover from the economic downturn caused by corruption, the PSA fails to understand how employees are expected to continue to achieve their revenue collection targets," he said.

While SOEs, including national carrier SAA, power utility Eskom and public broadcaster SABC continued to receive financial bailouts, SARS, a critical revenue collection tool for the economy, struggled with under-staffing and outdated systems.

"If government is at all serious to bring about an economic turn-around, the situation at SARS regarding human resources and infrastructure is in need of serious and priority attention," Fredericks said.

- African News Agency (ANA), Editing by Stella Mapenzauswa