

PSA warns public protector against victimisation of employees

IOL - 26 Oct 2019

PSA warns public protector against victimisation of employees Politics / 26 October 2019, 12:31pm / ANA Reporter Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane. File Picture Johannesburg - The Public Servants Association has warned the Public Protector of South Africa to "desist silencing the union's shop stewards and members by means of unfair suspension and threats of dismissals", and urged Parliament to expedite the process to conduct an inquiry into Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane's fitness to hold office. "The PSA represents the majority of PPSA employees and has previously been vocal on how the public protector handles human resource-related issues and discipline in the organisation," PSA general manager Ivan Fredericks said in a statement. "PSA shop stewards are targeted and disciplined for performing their functions as union representatives. The PSA regards these actions as a means to prevent the union from speaking out against ongoing improprieties in the workplace," he said. The PSA failed to understand how the PPSA could regard an employee, such as the chief operating officer, as unsuitable, while its chief executive officer Vussy Mahlangu was "dismissed by the department of rural development for serious acts of misconduct". Mahlangu's dismissal was confirmed through the general public service sectoral bargaining council's arbitration award issued on February 9, 2018. Public service regulations required the executive authority to subject prospective employees to suitability checks. In Mahlangu's case, after suitability and vetting checks, the State Security Agency had to date "not been able to conclude his vetting, owing to his past misconduct and dismissal". "It is the same Mr Mahlangu who regards the chief operating officer as unsuitable, while he, sustained by taxpayers and without the required security clearance certificate, continues to head the most important Chapter 9 institution," Fredericks said. The PSA was considering its options to protect its members and employees against ongoing victimisation and attempts to interfere with functions of employees to remain objective and execute their functions without fear and or favour. Recent unfair suspensions and threats of dismissals did not come as a surprise, as the PSA had previously warned about "the PPSA's unlawful acts", which were seemingly "continuing to silence the union to cover up rot within the PPSA". "The PSA urges Parliament to urgently speed up the process to conduct an inquiry into the public protector's fitness to hold office to avoid further damage to the PPSA and assure South Africans of the integrity of this crucial constitutional institution in all areas of its operation, including its human resources," Fredericks said.