



South Africa could see first mass public sector strike since 2010

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South Africa could see first mass public sector strike since 2010 Bloomberg27 September 2022 South African public servants are preparing to reject a government wage offer, raising the prospect of the first major strike by state workers in more than a decade. Preliminary results from a ballot of the Public Servants Association, the biggest government labour union, show workers won't accept the proposal to increase pay by 3% and continue receiving a cash gratuity until March, the PSA said Monday in an emailed statement. The government's current offer expires on Wednesday. "Current mandating outcomes indicate that votes are tilting toward rejecting the offer," the PSA said. Remuneration of the government's 1.3 million workers accounts for almost a third of total government expenditure, and keeping it in check is key to the National Treasury's plans to rein in the budget deficit and bring runaway state debt under control. The unions have argued that inflation-beating increases are warranted in light of soaring food and energy costs. The annual consumer inflation rate is currently 7.6%. Public servants in July lowered their demands for pay increases of as much as 10% to 6.5%, after the government rejected their earlier request on the grounds that it was unaffordable. Worker anger about the government's refusal to accede to their wage demands boiled over on Monday, when Minerals Resources and Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe was prevented from addressing the Congress of South African Trade Unions's annual conference in Johannesburg.

#CosatuNationalCongress2022 | Mantashe is boo'd off stage and has had to be ushered out the venue. Delegates are blaming ANC for failing to address the labour, living and economic

crises. @khanya_mntambo pic.twitter.com/FBbnxCgKU6 — EWN Reporter (@ewnreporter) September 26, 2022 Cosatu, as the labour federation is known, is a member of a tripartite alliance along with the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party that rules South Africa. Tensions have been growing between them over a decision by the ANC-led government to renege on a 2018 wage agreement — a decision that was backed by the country's highest court. Cosatu has also been scathing of the government for failing to address an ongoing energy crisis, as South Africa experiences record power outages this year. Public-sector workers last went on strike for three weeks in 2010 before settling on a wage increase of 7.5%. The PSA said it plans to ask the government to incorporate the cash gratuity into their baseline pay, or extend it, which "may ensure a positive members' mandate to accept the offer." ANC Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) Gwede Mantashe public sector public servants Public Servants Association strike action wages...

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