

MEDIA RELEASE	Auditor-General's R4.5 billion recovery in war on waste and corruption: PSA urges President to take action
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 245 000 public-sector employees, cautiously welcomes the Auditor-General's (AG) recent announcement of the recovery of R4.5 billion lost to wasteful and corrupt practices across government departments and entities.

The R4.5 billion recovered over the last five years is, however, a drop in the ocean considering that it is estimated that South Africa is losing over R168 billion annually to corruption. This development, as part of the AG's expanded mandate to enforce accountability, is a significant step towards restoring public trust in state institutions and ensuring that public funds are used to improve service delivery and uplift communities. Whilst the PSA commends the AG and her office for their persistence and commitment to transparency, the Union remains concerned about systemic weaknesses that continue to enable financial mismanagement and irregular expenditure. The PSA reiterates the Union's call for swift and decisive action against officials implicated in wrongdoing, stronger internal controls, consequence management across all spheres of government, greater protection for whistleblowers who expose corruption and maladministration, and ongoing collaboration between oversight bodies, unions, and civil society to strengthen accountability.

The country is under siege from criminals and crooks who will stop at nothing to unduly and illegally benefit from the lack of political will from those in positions of responsibility. The recent murder of a Senior Auditor from the City of Ekurhuleni, who was investigating R2 billion in missing funds and death threats to many involved in compliance, inspection and audit space are extremely concerning. The AG highlighted that municipalities remain the weakest link where oversight is inadequate to a point that responsible leaders do not even bother to read her reports.

The President's *Operation Vulindlela* is also not assisting, with only one metro receiving a clean audit. The phenomenon of ghost employees continues to cost the country vast amounts and there seems to be a lack of urgency to address the matter. The PSA previously warned that politically connected appointments, failure to fill vacancies, as well as lack of consequence management will bring the country to its knees and clearly, South Africa is in trouble. The PSA therefore urges the President to act decisively and ensure that South Africa rids itself of the rot.

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