

MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19 corruption: PSA does not support Cabinet Committee's involvement**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is strongly opposed to President Cyril Ramaphosa's appointment of a Cabinet Committee to investigate allegations of tender corruption in relation to the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The PSA, which represents more the 240 public servants, earlier welcomed the decision that the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) will be investigating the alleged corruption amounting to billions of Rands in the awarding of PPE tenders by provinces. The PSA is extremely disappointed that a Cabinet Committee will now also be involved in the process. The PSA is adamant that the SIU should be allowed to continue its investigations unhindered and that perpetrators be brought to book. The appointment of a Cabinet Committee to deal with this matter not only duplicates investigations but has a strong likelihood of compromising investigations where there are links between service providers and senior government officials.

There have been many incidents of high-level corruption in government and state-owned entities, yet these perpetrators have still not been prosecuted and convicted for the looting of state resources. Government's inability to deal decisively with corruption is increasingly impacting on the economy. This dismal situation is affecting the most vulnerable in society as well as government's ability to pay agreed and overdue salary increases to public servants who are continuing their efforts at the frontline of the pandemic. There is a rapid and steady loss of confidence by the public in government's ability to lead during this crisis period.

The PSA regards the appointment of a Cabinet Committee to deal with PPE tender fraud as another excuse to delay the process with the hope that the issue will eventually be swept under the carpet. South Africa is already being touted at one of the most corrupt countries in the world and the PSA calls on the President to act decisively. The PSA urges the President to abolish this Committee and rather invest resources into the SIU to eradicate corruption. The President should also enlist private sector expertise and all other available resources to assist the SIU in its investigation to restore confidence.

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