



MEDIA RELEASE **COVID-19: PSA welcomes release of SIU report on procurement corruption and calls for stern action**

DATE 26 January 2022

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 230 000 public-sector employees, welcomes the release by the Presidency of a Special Investigating Unit (SIU) investigation report into corrupt procurement of COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) resources.

The investigation discovered that out of 4 549 contracts awarded, 2 803 contracts were found to be irregular at all levels of government, with an amount of R2.1 billion being misappropriated and stolen from the state. The corrupt and criminal activities were committed at the expense of healthcare workers who sacrificed their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic in service of citizens.

The PSA strongly condemns such gross misconduct and deems it to be unforgivable. Swift consequence management and the rule of law must now apply. The stolen money must be recovered through civil recovery mechanisms and the PSA urges the National Prosecuting Authority to prioritise these cases. Bank accounts of alleged perpetrators must be frozen. Proceeds of these crimes resulted in COVID-19 frontline workers not receiving adequate PPE. Government was further unable to provide a token of appreciation to the healthcare workers.

Law enforcement agencies must act swiftly to bring to book all persons implicated and ensure hard sentences for those found guilty. Government has a duty to put stringent measures in place to manage processes related to the procurement of emergency resources. Unless such processes are streamlined, taxpayers' money will continue to be looted and misused. The PSA calls on members of the public and public servants to report acts of corruption through the Anti-corruption Hotline, coordinated by the Public Service Commission.

The PSA urges government to use money recovered from such acts of corruption to hire more healthcare workers and to absorb community healthcare workers. In addition, the infrastructure at healthcare facilities must be improved to ensure citizens of decent healthcare.

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