

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **COVID-19 tenders: PSA calls for decisive action**

**DATE**                                      6 August 2020

**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                            Reuben Maleka  
082 903 6808

---

The Public Servants Association (PSA) as one of the largest unions representing public servants, despite being encouraged by the Minister of Finance’s commitment to publish a list off all companies that were awarded tenders related to COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE), warns that decisive actions are required.

In view of the embarrassment the country is currently facing owing to corruption related to PPE the PSA warns the Minister that he should not merely be paying “lip service” or treat this as public relations exercise. The Minister’s commitment to go for an open tender system and standardise pricing as opposed to the selection of certain service providers, should have been implemented from the start to avoid massive overspending, inflated prices, and collusion between service providers and corrupt officials. The ban on emergency procurement must also be implemented with immediate effect to prevent further abuse of the system.

In the wake of numerous complaints by the PSA regarding the lack and quality of PPE, it is now clear that good governance principles were not adhered to amidst trying times for the country. The PSA calls on the Special Investigation Unit to prioritise investigations to ensure recovery of looted funds and successful prosecution of those who unduly benefited at the expense of frontline workers. These workers are in desperate need of PPE and too many have already and unduly lost their lives in the line of duty.

It is furthermore of serious concern to the PSA that connected individuals are exploiting the COVID-19 crisis to vastly enrich themselves while public servants, at the frontline of combatting the pandemic, are denied allowances as government laments its state of poverty.

Government has a standing commitment to unions that no frontline worker can be coerced to perform any function without the necessary PPE and that employees should be guided by standard operating procedures that direct the specific PPE required for certain areas of work. The PSA calls on all its members to report any non-compliance to the Union to ensure that all institutions comply with the applicable legislation. In addition, any form of corruption should be reported as such activities are not only plunging the country into a deeper economic crisis but ultimately impact on efforts to flatten the COVID-19 curve.

END