

MEDIA RELEASE	Department of Defence spending R181 million on dilapidated building smells of corruption
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The PSA is shocked by reports that the Department of Defence is considering spending R181 million to purchase a reportedly dilapidated building in Midrand in Gauteng.

The Department demonstrates an uncaring attitude towards the well-being of its employees. In less than two months, the Department was exposed when it irrationally directed employees to relocate to the Besters Building, despite the building being gutted by fire and never renovated. Subsequently, the Court interdicted the Department from moving to the dilapidated building.

The Department is again in the news, allegedly trying to purchase another dilapidated building. The plan to buy a building in Halfway Gardens, Midrand, despite an inspection report indicating structural defects, smells of corruption and the Special Investigating Unit must immediately intervene. It is reported that the Department's own civil engineer inspected this building, which has been vacant for more than five years, and produced a report that suggests that an independent engineer must examine the building and decide about its long-term integrity. Amongst the issues reflected in the report are cracks in the walls, concrete pushing up carpets, water leaks, rusted gutters and window frames, as well as faulty electric components and wiring. In addition, the building plans for some additions to the complex were not authorised by the architect and were not submitted to the municipality for approval as required by law.

Despite all these red flags, the Department is set on acquiring this building, raising various questions. The Department is putting its hope on a contractor who indicated that the building can be renovated and identified faulty issues can be fixed. This will, however, be at the expense of the country and taxpayers.

The PSA urges the Department of Public Works and National Treasury to stop this looming wasteful expenditure, as the country has lost vast amounts owing to corruption. The Department of Defence needs to act in an accountable and efficient manner. Those who approve the purchase, despite glaring danger, must be investigated and face the consequences for such recklessness.

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