

MEDIA RELEASE Department of Public Works and Infrastructure R14 million payments to ghost workers: PSA calls for urgent intervention

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked and outraged following disturbing revelations that millions of rands in taxpayers' money are being systematically channelled to "ghost workers" in the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure reported this to Parliament when presenting the budget. The Minister indicated that there had been significant pushback to his efforts to clean up corruption, with some senior officials refusing to cooperate with lifestyle audits.

At a time when South Africa is facing severe fiscal constraints, crumbling public infrastructure, and a critical shortage of essential frontline personnel, it is utterly unacceptable that public funds are being weaponised to enrich syndicates and corrupt people. Preliminary investigations and internal payroll audits have revealed a deeply entrenched network of corruption. Over R14 million are transferred monthly into banking accounts of non-existent employees, deceased people, and unverified personnel who have never set foot in a Department of Public Works and Infrastructure facility.

The PSA does not view this situation as an administrative oversight but a calculated, deliberate heist of public funds. Every rand paid to a ghost worker is a rand stolen from a school needing maintenance and growing unemployment in the country.

This systemic manipulation of administrative controls is a gross violation of financial accountability and a direct assault on the fiscal integrity of the Department. The PSA urges the Minister to activate immediate salary freezes for all unverified persons flagged by the system, pending physical and biometric validation. The PSA also call on audits to be conducted also on Senior officials and Ministers and not only target low ranking officials.

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