

MEDIA RELEASE Government Printing Works: PSA concerned about deteriorating state

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is dismayed by the state of the Government Printing Works (GPW), which is being run into the ground owing to poor Executive leadership.

The PSA strongly objected to the appointment of the current Chief Executive Officer (CEO). It was foreseeable that her appointment would lead the GPW to complete chaos as she did not meet the requirements for the post and lacks financial management and business administration competencies. The Minister of Home Affairs, however, insisted on appointing her.

The GPW was in a healthy financial position prior to the current CEO appointment. It was reporting annual profits of more than R300 million. It also obtained unqualified audit reports for seven consecutive years before her appointment. Since her appointment, the GPW recorded losses of hundreds of millions. Owing to poor management of procurement projects, it was further required to surrender more than R1.1 billion to National Treasury.

The GWP is continually appointing new employees whilst outsourcing most of its core functions to private printers. Employees have raised concerns about the GPW's deteriorating state, but their concerns are being ignored. An independent culture survey also indicated employees' dissatisfaction with the GPW's management and underlined that the morale of staff is extremely low. Poor strategic planning results in printing machines breaking down owing to the lack of maintenance and parts for replacements. In some instances, new machines are procured and not installed until they exceed their free maintenance contractual period.

The PSA is not surprised by the Auditor-General of South Africa's damning findings against the GPW as pleas to the Minister and the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs have been ignored. It is disheartening to witness another former successful component of government being sucked dry like many other state-owned entities that have been brought to their knees. The PSA urges President Cyril Ramaphosa to urgently intervene before the GPW is completely destroyed.

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