

MEDIA RELEASE Hawks: PSA concerned about looming service delivery disaster

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned that a critical staff shortage at the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, commonly known as the Hawks, has reached an unacceptable level, with a negative impact on service delivery.

On an organogram providing for 5 332 employees, only 2 688 posts are filled and only 500 posts will be filled in the 2025/26-financial year. The concerning situation demonstrates a lack of willingness by government to combat serious and organised crime. The failure to adequately capacitate the Hawks is scandalous and self-sabotaging in the face of increasing criminality and lawlessness. This situation affects the country's economic development, with the level of crime, corruption, and lawlessness deterring investors, which are needed to address the stagnant economy.

The staff shortage has led to delays in finalising investigations, particularly in complex cases involving multiple jurisdictions and high-profile corruption. This delay undermines public trust in the Hawks' ability to deliver justice promptly. The underfunded Hawks even outsource key cases as it does not have capacity. This situation threatens state security and should be concerning to any responsible government. A reliance on external assistance raises concerns about the efficiency and confidentiality of sensitive investigations. It is thus not surprising that the Hawks only probed four state capture cases after a R1 billion inquiry unearthed grand-scale corruption. The PSA has called on government to fill vacant positions across all departments and parastatals. This call was ignored as government is obsessed with cutting the cost of employees.

The PSA stands in solidarity with dedicated Hawks employees who continue to work under challenging conditions. The PSA advocates for better support, resources, and working conditions to enable them to perform their duties effectively. The PSA urges government to prioritise the filling of vacant positions at the Hawks. Immediate steps must be taken to recruit and train employees to ensure that the Hawks can operate at full capacity to effectively address crime rates. The integrity of public institutions and the trust of citizens depend on swift and decisive measures, including intentional capacitation of critical institutions. Failure to address resourcing of the Hawks will result in looters and criminals roaming free, with the message that crime pays.

The PSA stand firm in the Union's commitment to transparency, accountability, and justice. The PSA will continue to monitor the situation closely and advocate for the necessary steps to be taken to eradicate corruption from government.

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