

MEDIA RELEASE	Public Sector Wage Bill: PSA appalled by Minister's arrogant statements
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is appalled by the irresponsible, wild-west approach statement on a very sensitive discussion of national importance by the newly-appointed Minister for Public Service and Administration (MPSA), Senzo Mchunu, and apparent misinformation about consultation with labour as portrayed in his statement.

The PSA that represent some 240 000 public-sector employees pointed out that the MPSA's statements on the reduction of the public-service wage bill go directly against sound labour relations and that plans were not well thought through, are simply based on pressure from Treasury without taking into account laws and service-delivery impacts.

Unions in the Public Service declared a dispute on these measures, including the early-retirement "offer" and the reduction of performance bonuses. Conciliation on these disputes has been set down by the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) for 26 July 2019. The PSA pointed out that if labour was consulted on these matters, as alleged by the MPSA, it would not be in dispute with the employer. Labour has been calling in the PSCBC for the employer to rather engage proper on these measures as it is clearly contemplating retrenchments in the Public Service.

The PSA further pointed out that the curbing of overtime and non-filling of vacancies has an impact on service delivery in the Public Service, whilst the impression is continuously created that this should ascribed to poor services rendered by public servants. Public servants are pressed to perform additional functions owing to vacancies and working overtime without compensation to the detriment of their health and safety.

The PSA stated that instead of conducting a proper job analysis and aligning the organograms of departments to service-delivery needs, services are aligned with the budget to the detriment of service delivery. The PSA is furthermore of the view that the current process by government to grant early-retirement packages to employees between 55 and 59 years will not yield the intended results and will rather result in the erosion of skills and expertise in the Public Service.

In addition, the recently released *Improved Ministerial Handbook* underlines the fact that government is more concerned about its own safety and wellbeing than that of Public Service employees. The PSA is strongly condemning the improvements that grant additional perks to executives and calls upon the President to reconsider these improvements. The PSA furthermore repeats its call on the State as employer to withdraw these measures, to respect the rules of the country and follow a proper, legislated process to ensure a sound labour-relations process before implementation.

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