

MEDIA RELEASE: Public Protector: PSA concerned about hypocritical conduct

DATE: 26 July 2019

EMBARGO: None

ENQUIRIES: communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association has expressed concern about reported investigations by the Public Protector (PP), Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane, into SA Revenue Service (SARS) human-resource processes and the appointment of the new SARS Commissioner, Edward Kieswetter, whilst her own office should be investigated for the fitness to hold office of its CEO, Mr Vussy Mahlangu, and his security clearance status.

The Union described the Adv Mkhwebane's conduct as hypocritical and a ploy to derail efforts by SARS to restore its credibility and regain taxpayers' confidence in executing its collection of revenue mandate. The PSA has full confidence in the current SARS management and discourages any form of harassment and abuse of power against SARS by the OPP or any other institution for ulterior motives.

The PSA is further concerned that its shop stewards at the Office of the Public Protector (OPP) are being victimised and even suspended for performing their functions as Union representatives. The PSA regards these actions as a means to prevent the Union from speaking out against ongoing improprieties in the workplace, including unlawful surveillance of phone calls, laptops being taken without any repercussions or reasons for such acts. The PSA indicated that it will resist any form of union bashing by the OPP. The Union is still awaiting the investigation outcome that was requested from the Minister of State Security, Ms Ayanda Dlodlo, 10 June 2019 regarding the State Security Agency being misused by the OPP.

In addition, the PSA is opposing the amended of policies by the OPP without consultation, thus undermining bargaining forum processes. The PSA demanded that all policies amended without consultation be withdrawn and be tabled at the forum to afford employees the opportunity to provide inputs. The OPP, however, refused to withdraw the amendments, resulting in the PSA declaring a dispute that will in terms of the *Labour Relations Act* be referred to the CCMA for conciliation. Should parties fail to reach an agreement at conciliation, OPP employees may embark on protected strike action after notice has been served.

The PSA appealed to the Speaker of Parliament, Thandi Modise, to initiate an urgent investigation into the OPP to assure South Africans of the integrity of this crucial Constitutional institution in all areas of its operation, including its human resources.

END

