

MEDIA RELEASE

Public Protector: PSA warns about victimisation of employees

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has issued a stern warning to the Public Protector South Africa (PPSA) to desist silencing the Union's shop stewards and members by means of unfair suspension and threats of dismissals.

The PSA represents the majority of PPSA employees and has previously been vocal on how the Public Protector handles human-resource related issues and discipline in the organisation. PSA shop stewards are targeted and disciplined 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.

The PSA fails to understand how the PPSA can regard an employee such as the Chief Operating Officer as unsuitable, whilst its Chief Executive Officer, Vussy Mahlangu, was dismissed by the Department of Rural Development for serious acts of misconduct. Mr Mahlangu's dismissal was confirmed through the General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council's arbitration award issued on 9 February 2018.

The Public Service Regulations require the executive authority to subject prospective employees to suitability checks. In Mr Mahlangu's case, after suitability and vetting checks, the State Security Agency has to date not been able to conclude his vetting owing to his past misconduct and dismissal. It is the same Mr Mahlangu who regards the Chief Operating Officer as unsuitable whilst he, sustained by taxpayers and without the required security clearance certificate, continues to head the most important Chapter 9 institution.

The PSA is considering its options to protect its members and employees against ongoing victimisation and attempts to interfere with functions of employees to remain objective and execute their functions without fear and or favour. Recent unfair suspensions and threat of dismissals are not coming as a surprise as the PSA has previously warned about the PPSA unlawful acts, which are seemingly continuing to silence the union to cover up rot within the PPSA.

The PSA urges Parliament to urgently speed up the process to conduct an inquiry into the Public Protector's fitness to hold office to avoid further damage to the PPSA and assure South Africans of the integrity of this crucial Constitutional institution in all areas of its operation, including its human resources.

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