

MEDIA RELEASE

PIC Commission of Inquiry: PSA condemns third extension

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the decision by President Cyril Ramaphosa to grant a third extension to the Commission of Inquiry into Public Investment Corporation (PIC) investments to submit a final report by 15 December 2019.

The latest extension comes after the Commission, under the leadership of Judge Lex Mpati, should have provided its findings by 31 July 2019 but was previously granted an extension until 31 October 2019. The PSA initially welcomed the inquiry as the Union that represents more than 240 000 public-sector employees was key in insisting on the process. It, however, did not anticipate that the inquiry would be dragged out for so long and become costly to the taxpayers. The PSA understands that there were several witnesses who had to be interviewed, but these inquiries have a tendency not to plan work according to the allocated time-frames with no associated haste or pressure to conclude matters timeously.

Whilst the investigation is ongoing and extended, the PIC continues with investments of public servants' pension money and monies lost are not recovered timeously with no consequences to individuals implicated in the wrong doings. This not only has an impact on the economy but also on returns that could have been received if funds were recovered and invested properly.

The PSA pointed out that to continuously respond to public servants concerns by indicating that the Government Employees Pension Fund is defined-benefit fund is no longer acceptable. The Fund could have provided much more benefits to public servants if sound investments were made. In addition, the calculation of the actuarial interest, is further eroding benefits upon pay-out.

In addition, the Commission has lost legitimacy owing to scandalous reports implicating the likes of Gill Marcus and the lead investigator as well as the fact that major corporations implicated in malpractice, such as Steinhoff International Holdings, never featured in the Commission's work.

The PSA calls on the President and the Chairperson of the Inquiry to urgently finalise the investigation without any further extensions. The prolonged period up to December 2019 is regarded as unjustifiable when considering that the initial timeframe for the investigation was from October 2017 until April 2019, taking into account the extent of the enquiry.

END

