

MEDIA RELEASE PSA regards rising unemployment as national crisis

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EMBARGO None

Enquiries communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) has noted with grave concern the release of the latest unemployment figures by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), indicating that the unemployment rate has increased by 1.4%, from 27.6% in the first quarter of 2019, to 29.0% in the second quarter of the year.

The decline sadly comes in the wake of the State of the Nation address made earlier this year by President Cyril Ramaphosa, where he indicated that job creation would be government's biggest priority during his tenure. These figures, confirming the highest jobless rate since 2008, mean that the number of unemployed persons has increased by 455 000 while only 21 000 people have been employed.

The PSA pointed out that apart from this grim reality, the country's economy continues to struggle under the weight of fraud and corruption and financial mismanagement that have impacted on economic growth, with the hardest hit being the poorest in society and the youth.

Of even bigger concern to the PSA is the continued drive to reduce Public Service staff establishment, with ongoing reports that government intends to shed jobs to cut the bill as well forcing pay cuts on public servants. The Union pointed out that a loss of 30 000 jobs in the Public Service, as contemplated by government, will have a severe ripple-effect on many more people and will do nothing to address the unemployment rate, which can be now be regarded as a national crisis.

The PSA called on President Ramaphosa to make his job-creation plans clear, as so far, no progress is seen. The Union further repeated it appeal that the offer of early-retirement packages and voluntary-severance packages to public servants be placed on hold until the reconfiguration of government is completed and that consequences be managed in a proper manner in the interest of service delivery.

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