

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA alarmed that prolonged suspensions of Magistrates cost taxpayers R31 million
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EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely worried about media reports revealing that six Magistrates, currently on suspension, have collectively earned R31 million in salaries from September 2018 to date.

According to the reports, one Magistrate has been on suspension since September 2018, and another since July 2020. These prolonged suspensions, over several years, are excessive and unacceptable. Like all employees, Magistrates are entitled to have their disciplinary matters finalised speedily and fairly. Such unreasonable delays are inherently unjust, inflicting emotional distress and reputational damage that undermines the dignity of those involved.

Equally troubling is the financial cost to government. The R31 million in salaries paid to suspended Magistrates is exorbitant, particularly in the context of the country's ongoing fiscal challenges. These funds, sourced from heavily taxed citizens, could have been better utilised in strengthening service delivery or addressing staff shortages. The absence of these Magistrates, amidst an overburdened judicial system, has exacerbated backlogs and delayed access to justice.

Some of the allegations facing the suspended Magistrates, including bribery, dishonesty, and other serious misconduct, demand urgent and decisive action. The failure to finalise these cases undermines public trust in the justice system. Justice must be done and be seen to be done without undue delay. Timely resolution of these matters is critical to uphold accountability and ensure that no one is above the law.

The PSA, therefore, calls on the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development to urgently intervene and ensure that the disciplinary cases of the six Magistrates are concluded without further delay. The Department must demonstrate its commitment to zero tolerance for misconduct by acting swiftly and decisively. Finalising these cases will assist in restoring public confidence in the integrity of the justice system.

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