

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA calls on government to prevent collapse of media sector**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) calls on government to support the South African media industry financially to prevent retrenchments brought on by the impact of COVID-19.

Despite all sectors of the South African economy being affected by the current economic climate, retrenchments and job losses should be avoided as far as possible. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the media served as an effective means of communication to South Africans and was instrumental in education and information sharing, which contributed to curbing the spread of the virus. This was acknowledged recently by President Cyril Ramaphosa when he applauded the media's role during the pandemic as well as the role the media played in exposing corruption and maladministration.

Allowing retrenchments in the media sector will not only contribute to soaring unemployment and increasing reliance on government for social grants, but will also erode the media's role as educator, information source and watchdog.

The PSA, representing more than 230 000 public-sector workers, previously in July 2020 appealed to government to assist in avoiding job losses in the media sector. The PSA is aware of the constraint government is facing to save the economy and the impact of COVID-19 but calls on government to carefully consider the impact of bailouts that are in the interest of the country and institutions established to protect constitutional democracy. The PSA calls on the President to assist the public broadcaster to avoid retrenchments as it is the sole means of communication to the most vulnerable in society, especially learners making use of the broadcaster for on-line education during the COVID-19 lockdown.

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