



MEDIA RELEASE	PSA calls on Mpumalanga Premier to act against wasteful irregular precautionary suspensions
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is aware that Mpumalanga Provincial Departments have paid R9 million in salaries of 35 employees who were placed on precautionary suspension for more than 60 days. Suspension periods range between nine and 20 months, contrary to the provisions of the Disciplinary Code and Procedure. Failure to conclude the hearings within 60 calendar days has made the suspensions irregular.

The Department of Public Service and Administration's (DPSA) Guide on Precautionary Suspension, read with Disciplinary Code and Procedures, provides that the employer must hold a disciplinary hearing within 60 calendar days. It is clear that precautionary suspensions are used by departments to intimidate, victimise, and silence employees. Failure to finalise matters can further be attributed to incompetence in labour relations sections and the inability to investigate cases. In addition, some of these cases are fictional.

The public sector is bending under a staff shortage. Having 35 employees who are paid without performing their duties is not only a wasteful expenditure but impacts on service delivery. The PSA has consistently raised this matter at Departmental Bargaining Chambers and Provincial Sectoral Councils. The waste of state resources and abuse of power, however, continue without consequence management for this injustice. Excuses of complexity are empty as the Code provides that a chairperson should be appointed to preside over the matter and postpone, if necessary, to allow for further investigation. The employer cannot decide that a matter is complicated.

The PSA calls upon the Mpumalanga Premier to urgently address this wastage, abuse of power, and incompetence by departments. The DPSA is also guilty of failing to ensure that its Guide and Disciplinary Code are implemented by departments. Failure to hold departments accountable perpetuates the injustice, unfairness, and contravention of the South African Constitution that provides that everyone has a right to fair labour practices. Should the Premier and Minister of Public Service and Administration fail to address this irregularity and demand accountability from those responsible, the PSA will approach the Public Service Commission as custodian of good governance. The suspended workers must either be recalled immediately or the disciplinary process be concluded promptly.

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