

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA concerned about number of officials not on active duty owing to unrest and no meaningful progress to resolve issue at Mpumalanga Department of Health
DATE	17 June 2026
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) notes with serious concern the continued exclusion, administrative neglect, and prolonged displacement of managers at the Mpumalanga Department of Health, some of whom have been kept out of their workplaces for an unreasonable and unjustifiable period.

These employees were removed from duty following unrest and objections raised by members of other trade union. Shockingly, in several instances, no lawful precautionary suspension letters were issued in terms of applicable labour-relations prescripts. Instead, employees were informally and improperly instructed to stay away from their workplaces under the misleading justification that they were being protected from victimisation, whilst they were being subjected to investigations. This practice is irregular, procedurally defective, and constitutes a serious departure from lawful administrative action.

Although investigations have since been concluded in several matters and outcomes communicated, the Department has failed to take the necessary and mandatory consequential steps to restore dignity by allowing affected employees to return to their positions. Instead, employees remain indefinitely at home or reassigned without clarity, fairness, or finality despite the conclusion of processes that should have been resolved their status long ago. This as an ongoing abuse of administrative authority, resulting in continued prejudice to affected members and a breakdown of lawful labour-relations principles, including procedural fairness, finality of decisions, and respect for concluded processes. In addition, indications of improper external interference in employment-related decisions in the Department are extremely concerning. Placement, suspension, transfer, and reinstatement decisions are statutory responsibilities of the employer and must be exercised independently, lawfully, and without external influence. Any deviation from this standard undermines the integrity of public administration.

The PSA records the Union's objection to the Department's failure to respect its organisational rights as a duly recognised trade union. Despite representing affected employees, the PSA has in certain instances, been excluded from engagements concerning the Union's members, whilst other unions have been permitted participation. This conduct is inconsistent with the principles of collective bargaining and good-faith engagement. The continued exclusion of employees from their workplaces, coupled with administrative inaction, has caused severe and ongoing prejudice, including emotional distress, reputational harm, and sustained disruption of livelihoods. It has also contributed to instability in the workplace and negatively affected service delivery in the Department.

The PSA exhausted extensive engagement processes with the Head of Department and the MEC for Health. The matter was escalated to the Minister of Health, who referred it back to the MEC for intervention. Despite these high-level interventions, no meaningful corrective action has been taken.

The PSA demands the immediate upliftment of the suspensions for all affected managers, communication of all outstanding investigation outcomes, an end to any external interference in HR decision-making, full recognition of PSA, and the restoration of sound labour relations.

The PSA places on record that continued failure to resolve this matter reflects a serious governance and compliance failure in the Department and may constitute ongoing unlawful administrative conduct. Given the Department's sustained non-compliance and failure to implement finalised processes, the PSA has served formal notice of the Union's intention to institute legal proceedings. Should immediate corrective action not be taken, the PSA will proceed without further engagement to enforce the rights of the Union's members through all available legal and statutory mechanisms.

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