

**MEDIA RELEASE: PSA condemns government's splurge on ministerial housing upgrades**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by government intensions to spend R733 million during the current financial year on upgrades of ministerial and parliamentary luxuries during pressing economic times that also robbed public servants decent wage increases to mitigate steep rises in living expenses.

The PSA in April 2019 submitted input to the Minister for Public Service and Administration to initiate discussions in the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council to re-open wage negotiations for public servants. The PSA has been on record since the previous negotiations, that government is not paying attention to the various needs of its employees. "Government claims that the wage bill needs to be reduced. Already from 1 April 2019, means have been unilaterally introduced by government to reduce the wage bill with the offer of early retirements to certain groups of public servants and the reduction of other service benefits. How can an expense of more than R730 million be justified?" said PSA General Manager, Ivan Fredericks

The PSA pointed out that since the signing of the 2018-wage agreement in the Public Service, recent steep price increases in goods and services (such as electricity, petrol and other commodities), which could not have been anticipated during the wage negotiations, have placed an enormous financial burden on public servants. "The PSA is thus compelled to call for immediate negotiations to bring about a fair wage increase to sustain the cost of living of public servants and their families," said Mr Fredericks.

"The PSA condemns this spending spree by government on what is non-essential at this point in the economics of the country. The Union calls on President Ramaphosa to ensure that the budgeted funds for upgrades be reconsidered and diverted to addressing urgent needs related to collapsing hospitals, clinics, government mortuaries and health and safety in government buildings that pose a risk to thousands of employees and millions of citizens. The PSA would not like to see a repeat of the tragic Bank of Lisbon incident, while politicians swim in luxurious carpets that are alleged to be worth millions of rands. The PSA also calls on politicians to reject the planned spending if, indeed, they have the interest of the country at heart," said Mr Fredericks.

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