

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA condemns Limpopo Department of Health's failure to effect outstanding overtime payments to 900 employees
DATE	13 December 2023
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the Limpopo Department of Health's failure to effect approved overtime payments to more than 900 employees.

Employees were requested to work overtime, which exceeded 30% of their monthly basic salaries, owing to service-delivery demands and noting that the Department has a severe staff shortage. More than 900 employees are owed some R3.9 million, with the Department hiding behind Treasury processes for not paying out the overtime remuneration. The Department's failure to pay these employees for their overtime hours is attributed to its non-compliance with Public Service Regulations as there was no ministerial approval for the deviation for the employees to work overtime exceeding 30% of their basic monthly salaries.

Employees are negatively affected by decision makers' failure to ensure compliance with all regulations and prescripts before requesting them to work overtime. The Department had undertaken to pay affected employees before the end of September 2023. This date was later changed to November 2023 before now being amended to the end of the financial year, which is March 2024.

The Department is taking advantage of the fact that the affected employees are essential services employees who cannot embark on industrial action regarding this unfairness. In addition, it would not assist in referring a dispute in this regard to the Bargaining Council as the Bargaining Council will be reluctant to order the Department to pay the overtime money since the overtime money exceeded 30% of the monthly basic salaries.

The employees are infuriated, and some were, at a stage, even prepared to down tools. It required the intervention of unions to engage the Department to resolve this impasse. Despite this, the Department clearly does not care about the welfare of these employees who continue to suffer at the hand of an uncaring employer who is also quick to charge them for mistakes without consideration of their emotional state, which is caused by the employer's actions.

The PSA calls on the Premier of Limpopo to urgently address this matter before it escalates and adversely affects already compromised health services. It cannot be correct that the Department fails to pay millions to deserving employees without any repercussions. These exhausted employees are facing a bleak festive season as they expected payment by November 2023, as promised by the Department. The Premier must note that these employees were not at fault and diligently rendered their services. Should the Department fail to effect payment, the PSA will be forced to consider other avenues to ensure that these employees are paid their well-deserved money.

END

