

MEDIA RELEASE PSA condemns repeated appointment of legal representatives by

Department of Home Affairs

DATE 18 August 2023

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) is deeply disappointed by the Department of Home Affairs' repeated decision to appoint external legal representation in ongoing disciplinary hearings involving numerous employees.

This move raises concerns about fairness, transparency, and the responsible use of public funds. The PSA initially referred this matter to the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) as an interpretation and application dispute, seeking a resolution that upholds the rights of employees and adheres to established regulations. The PSA is disheartened to note that despite two rulings in favour of the PSA by the PSCBC, the Department of Home Affairs chose to appoint external attorneys to review these rulings in the Labour Court. The Disciplinary Code and Procedures, as defined in PSCBC Resolution 2/1999, are intended to guide disciplinary proceedings, and ensure a fair and equitable process for all parties. It is disconcerting that the Department's actions seem to disregard these established guidelines. The Resolution clearly outlines that no party possesses an automatic right to have attorneys assigned to cases, and that any party must apply for this, which will be considered by the Presiding Officer.

The PSA finds it troubling that the continuous appointment of external attorneys appears to disregard both the spirit of fairness and the responsible use of public funds. The allocation of public resources towards repeated legal representation is deplorable and raises questions about the Department's priorities and commitment to fiscal prudence.

Considering these alarming developments, the PSA calls for an urgent investigation by the Public Service Commission into the use of public funds to appoint external legal representation. It is essential that the Department's actions are held to account, and a thorough inquiry is conducted to assess the justification and necessity of such appointments. The PSA remains dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of public-sector employees and stands firm in its commitment to ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in the public sector as well as the responsible use of tax payers' money.

END