

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA condemns violent strike and intimidation to its members and the public**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) condemns the intimidation of the Unions members by striking workers, who are blocking entrances in various government institutions and forcefully removing some PSA members, who have reported for duty. Whilst the PSA respects the rights of other union members and their demonstration to force the employer to accede to worker's demands, the Union cannot keep quiet when PSA member's rights are being violated.

The PSA would like to set the record straight regarding its participation in the 2023 wage negotiations and dispel the malicious propaganda by its detractors that it has sold out the struggle of public service workers and their demand for a living wage. In 2022, the PSA alone went on strike to exert pressure on the employer to accede to the 10% increase and other demands presented by the PSA based on a mandate from its members. At that time, other unions opted not to strike and remaining silent, even after the PSA had indicated that the employer was negotiating in bad faith and that there was no hope for the conciliated process to yield anything tangible and beneficial to workers. Yet, the PSA recognised and respected the right of other trade unions to remain outside of the PSA's strike action in pursuance of workers' interests.

The PSA went further to support these unions in their demonstrations during their conciliation processes even as it proceeded with its strike action. The PSA also ensured that there is no violence, harassment, and intimidation against workers who were not on strike, including members of the unions who were not part of the strike at that time. The PSA respects that other unions, based on their own understanding and reading of the situation, opted for a different tactic and strategy rather than going on industrial action. However, the PSA would like to dismiss, with the contempt it deserves, any claim that its strategic and tactical decision to pursue 2023/2024 negotiations amount to betrayal of workers' struggle. Furthermore, the PSA refutes the lie peddled in some quarters that it is currently not engaged in any activity to pursue the demands of workers. The PSA is currently locked in intense negotiations with the employer to do its best to get an offer that may get a favourable response from workers. The PSA is a mandate-driven organisation and will not accept any offer without a mandate from its members.

It has been brought to the PSA's attention that members across health and other institutions have been blocked from accessing their workplaces and others have been intimidated and forcefully removed from their workstations and departments. The PSA is calling on the Minister for Public Service Administration working together with the Police, to provide a clear plan to protect PSA members as they want to continue providing services to all communities without any fear and intimidation.

The PSA remains hopeful and will continue to participate in the current salary negotiations to protect employees' salaries and further improve conditions to mitigate the harsh economic conditions fuelled by loadshedding, the repo rate increase, food inflation, and high fuel costs.



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