

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA issues warning to Minister of Finance to stop agenda for public service job cuts**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is disturbed by reckless statements by the Minister of Finance regarding public service job cuts.

The PSA, as one of the largest Unions representing public servants at the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council, accepted government's final wage increase offer of an average of 7.5 % for public servants on salary levels 1 to 12 and those appointed in terms of the occupational-specific dispensation. It is thus disturbing that Minister Godongwana can make reckless statements on the rationalisation of staffing levels whilst he personally approved the budget as required in terms of Regulations 78 and 79 of the Public Service Regulations.

The PSA finds it difficult to accept such utterances from the Minister who indicated in his budget speech that the Public Service, especially the SA Police Service and the health and education sectors are understaffed. He indicated that additional funding were allocated to address these shortages. During the Public Service Summit, the former Minister of Public Service and Administration also alluded to the fact that the public service is not bloated, contrary to popular narrative. She indicated that, in fact, the public service was understaffed as is manifested by government's failure to provide services to citizens.

Labour, during several engagements, identified areas where government can save substantial amounts. These recommendations are, however, falling on deaf ears. The PSA will engage government on the Minister's irresponsible statement and to further ensure that public service employment levels meet the needs of citizens.

The PSA believes there are several budget items where government can save on expenses without resorting to threatening public servants' job security whilst looting of the fiscal continues without decisive action by government. Government should stop spending money on frivolous litigation, recoup money from individuals who are guilty of corruption and fraud and stop blaming the public service wage bill for its incompetence.

The PSA will continue to protect public servants' employment and remuneration to mitigate the current harsh economic conditions fuelled by loadshedding, repo-rate increases, food inflation, and high fuel costs. The PSA calls on President Cyril Ramaphosa to consider the plight of embattled public servants and find alternative means to address the fiscal constraint. The Minister of Finance cannot be allowed to cut jobs in the public sector at the expense of already crumbling service delivery.

END

