

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA questions government's R779 million expenditure on private security: Calls for accountability and asset optimisation
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked about revelations that the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) has spent R779 million over the past five years on private security services for state-owned properties.

This staggering expenditure, disclosed in Parliament by the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure, highlights the urgent need for greater transparency, accountability, and strategic asset management in government departments.

The PSA has noted that 318 properties are currently protected by private security companies under 248 separate contracts, with the top ten contracts alone being valued at R81 million. The PSA is alarmed by this level of spending whilst more than 10 000 state-owned properties remain unutilised. Many of these are derelict or unfit for occupation. Taxpayers are burdened with R65 million in rates and taxes annually for vacant properties, whilst government forfeits an estimated R83 million in potential revenue owing to underutilisation. This further creates opportunity for illegal occupation.

The PSA calls on the DPWI to accelerate the refurbishment and repurposing of state-owned properties to reduce reliance on private leases and security services. The DPWI must also conduct a comprehensive audit of all private security contracts to ensure compliance, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with regulatory frameworks. There is urgent need to implement a transparent asset optimisation strategy, including the leasing or disposal of non-core properties to reduce financial waste.

The DPWI is further urged to engage public-sector unions and civil society in oversight mechanisms to monitor government spending and property utilisation. The PSA supports the Minister's referral of high-value leases to the Special Investigating Unit and urges that similar scrutiny be applied to private security contracts. South Africa cannot afford to squander public funds on inefficient asset management whilst millions of citizens remain unemployed and public services are under strain.

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