

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA regards Special Investigating Unit's unpaid invoices of R986 million as sabotage**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) views the failure by state departments and public institutions to settle their outstanding debt of R986 million with the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) as an act of sabotage.

The SIU's primary mandate is to investigate serious allegations of corruption, malpractice, and maladministration in the administration of state institutions, state assets, and public money as well as any conduct that may seriously harm the interests of the public. The SIU is further tasked with recovering financial losses suffered by state institutions through civil litigation. The SIU is empowered to take civil action to correct any wrongdoing it uncovers in investigations.

The failure by government departments and public institutions to pay their invoices for investigations conducted and investigations that are still in process will leave the SIU without the financial means to proceed with its noble legislative mandate. The SIU is partially funded by Treasury and derives 40% of its income from investigative work. The high level of debt will inevitably result in the discontinuation or suspension of some investigations owing to lack of funds.

This unacceptable state of affairs is making it near impossible for the SIU to achieve its mandate. The reality is that an inefficient SIU will create fertile ground for thriving corruption as criminals will not be brought to book. In addition, the lack of consequence management for those alleged to have committed corrupt activities perpetuates more corruption as criminals know that they are safe.

The PSA suspects that these non-payments are intentional to protect some high-ranking officials and politically connected persons to get away with their crimes. Surprisingly, Treasury is silent when the *Public Finance Management Act* is not complied with by government departments and public institutions by failing to pay invoices within the prescribed period. The Department of Justice and its agencies owe the SIU some R71 million. It seems that the Ministers of Justice and Finance are sleeping on duty as they are not addressing this looming crisis. The PSA call on President Cyril Ramaphosa to step in as a matter of urgency and act against the responsible Ministers to ensure that the SIU can fulfil its critical role.

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