

MEDIA RELEASE	The PSA shocked by the R900 000 'mistake' at Collins Chabane Municipality
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) learnt with shock that the Collins Chabane Municipality paid a service provider an amount of R900 000 without rendering any service.

Despite the anomaly picked up by the office of the Auditor General, no official was held accountable. The Municipality attributed this to just a 'mistake' and reported that the service provider has already paid back R300 000 to the municipality.

The PSA believes that when dealing with public finance, there is nothing called 'mistaken payment' but it is fruitless and wasteful expenditure which must be accounted for by those officers who failed to diligently execute their duties. It is also highly inconceivable that such a mistake can occur as there is a segregation of duties amongst the officials within the finance section unless there is a collusion amongst the same. The payment is subjected to the approval by the official in the higher echelon of management thus cannot just press the button to pay without due diligence.

The PSA calls for the immediate suspension of the implicated officials, an investigation must be conducted and institute disciplinary proceedings if there is a case. There must be a clear demonstration and commitment to eradicate corruption, malpractices and maladministration within Limpopo lest the cancer of corruption will destroy the Public Service in the Province. The service provider must also be investigated because it is improbable that one can receive such huge payment and fail to report or enquire with the municipality the reason for payment knowing that they did not provide any service to warrant payment.

The PSA does not rule out the need for forensic audit in this municipality. This municipality is charged with the responsibility to provide service to the vulnerable people in the rural areas within Makhado and Thulamela wherein there is a dire need of services like water, electricity whilst there is also lot of unemployment, particularly amongst young people. It must be noted that the municipality is failing to provide these basic services hence they cannot afford to mistakenly pay such a huge amount without consequence management. Wasteful and irregular expenditure appears to be the normalised within municipalities in Limpopo without the consequence management. This is the same municipality is paying two municipal managers as the other one was put on suspension since 2018 whilst another one has been acting.

Despite utterances from Limpopo Provincial Administration constantly that they are fighting corruption, there remains lack of accountability in the province and that has created fertile ground for people to abuse their positions and illegally enriching themselves with the money meant to ensure provision of service delivery to the needy people. The silence of MEC of Provincial Treasury and MEC of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) is worrisome. It is disheartening that the taxpayer's money is used irresponsibly in this municipality while the Provincial Treasury and COGTA MECs do nothing to remedy the rot.

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