

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA urges Minister of Employment and Labour to lead by example and address 44% vacancy rate in her Department
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is dismayed by the state of the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL), which is currently operating with a staggering 44% vacancy rate.

This situation, compounded by dilapidated buildings and persistent Information and Communication Technology (ICT) system failures, is severely undermining service delivery. The PSA has expressed concern about the DEL's high vacancy rate, which led to the DEL doubling the target of Inspectors at a stage in an attempt to address service-delivery challenges. According to a recent report, the DEL has some 3 924 vacancies, which is substantial considering that it is responsible for ensuring the safety of South African employees.

The DEL is oblivious to the fact that its overworked employees are suffering from stress and burnout, which affect their mental health, work performance, health and family lives. The PSA does not accept the DEL's excuse that the failure to fill vacancies is attributed to cost-containment measures imposed by the Department of Public Service and Administration, as this illogical directive was revoked in April 2025. The DEL has not embarked on mass recruitment to fill vacancies. Instead, it acted irrationally by withdrawing the work-from-home policy, despite all these challenges.

In addition, the DEL's ageing infrastructure is dysfunctional, which hinders employees in performing their duties, such as processing claims, applications, and legal matters, which directly affect clients. Employees often experience harassment and intimidation from frustrated citizens owing to constant system failures and are accused of being lazy and not committed to their work. Adding to this, employees are working in an old, dilapidated building, where at times, Inspectors are scared to inspect their own building as this can result in intimidation and victimisation.

The PSA urges the Minister of Employment and Labour to act promptly and decisively by prioritising the filling of vacancies, replacing the outdated ICT system, and addressing non-compliant buildings. The provision of quality and professional service delivery by the DEL should be a key priority for the Minister, as well as the provision of a workplace that is safe and without risk to employees. The DEL, as custodian of workplace health and safety, should lead by example.

The PSA further calls for consequence management in respect of the ICT system, which hampers the DEL's output, whilst employees and the public are suffering.

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