

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA warns Government on plans to amend regulations to access retirement fund savings
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed about plans of amending pension fund regulations to allow state finance institutions to access retirement funds savings and regards such actions as another attempt to access the R1,8 trillion being managed by the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF).

The PSA, representing more than 240 000 public servants and retired public servants, has pointed out that this is the same kitty currently being used by government to bail out failing state-owned entities such as Eskom and SAA without any consequence management to root out the corruption and maladministration as the root causes of this predicament.

The PSA is further appalled by these plans when the needs of the people are being ignored. GEPF pensioners this year received a meagre 3.6% cost-of-living adjustment to sustain themselves amidst a wave of steep price increases brought about by the economic crisis. Government now wants to expose this same pension fund to further looting and corruption. Public servants are continuously informed that it is not possible for them to have access to their pension savings owing to legislation and fund rules without any consideration to possible amendments to assist them to fund their children's education, etc. Government now, however, seems willing to squander this hard-earned money without any accountability or repercussions. A Government tainted with corruption, that cannot fully account for the R500 billion sponsored to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and that fails to honour the agreed salary increases for its employees, has not earned the credibility or trust of the nation to have access to more funds.

The PSA is extremely concerned about the protection of citizens against Government and its alliance partners that are all in support of accessing more money. South Africans are clearly left to their own devices. The PSA has on numerous occasions called on Government to take decisive action against corruption, with little progress, despite calls from citizens. To allow Government access to more funds under such circumstances, is to give a child a marker to a child and ask him not to write on the walls. Government still needs to inform public servants on the prosecution of those implicated in the GEPF looting as revealed in the PIC report released on 12 March 2020.

The PSA reminds President Cyril Ramaphosa that South Africans are aware that investigations and outcomes have not yet resulted prosecutions. The looting of VBS Bank and financial institutions such as Ithala is a further clear indication that pension monies should not be utilised to open a state bank. The PSA remains determined to protect public servants' hard-earned pension fund investments. The Union is geared to deploy all means at its disposal in this regard and warns Government not to further abuse its powers.

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