

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	PSA welcomes Department of Home Affairs biometric verification initiative to combat payroll fraud amidst R3.9 billion loss
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<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) notes the announcement by the Department of Home Affairs regarding the launch of a biometric verification portal aimed at addressing the growing challenge of “ghost workers” in the public service, reportedly linked to losses of some R3.9 billion in 2025 owing to payroll fraud.

The PSA welcomes any initiative that seeks to strengthen accountability, enhance transparency, and protect public finances. The scale of the reported losses is extremely concerning and underscores the urgent need for robust and modernised systems to ensure that only legitimately employed public servants receive remuneration. Payroll fraud diverts critical resources from essential public services and undermines the credibility and integrity of the public sector. At a time when government departments are under severe budget constraints, every rand lost to corruption directly impacts on service delivery to citizens.

The introduction of biometric verification is a step in the right direction. It can strengthen employee-authentication processes, reduce opportunities for identity manipulation and fraudulent employment records as well as improving the accuracy of personnel and payroll systems.

Whilst the PSA supports measures to combat fraud, the Union emphasises that implementation must be conducted responsibly and in consultation with organised labour. In particular, the PSA calls for full consultation with labour stakeholders prior to rollout to ensure the protection of employees’ personal and biometric data in line with the *Protection of Personal Information Act*. There should be clear guidelines and transparency on how the system will operate as well as assurance that legitimate employees are not unfairly prejudiced or excluded owing to administrative or technical errors.

The PSA further stresses that technological solutions alone will not fully resolve the problem. Payroll fraud is often enabled by weak internal controls, poor oversight, and collusion. Accordingly, government must strengthen internal audit and risk-management systems, hold officials accountable for negligence or misconduct, and enhance consequence management across all departments.

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