



MEDIA RELEASE: **PSA welcomes Department of Home Affairs going cashless but calls for improved security**

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EMBARGO: None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), as the majority Union representing employees of the Department of Home (DHA) Affairs, welcomes the DHA's intention to move towards cashless offices owing to growing security concerns.

The PSA has been at the forefront of efforts to promote the provision of healthy, safe working environments for public-sector employees and noted the DHA's presentation to parliament this week wherein it indicated its intention to move towards cashless offices. The aim is to reduce the cost of cash-in-transit services and risks to staff and clients of armed robberies as all offices have card machines. The PSA welcomes these proactive plans as a step in the right direction. The PSA calls on the DHA to implement the plan as a matter of urgency to prevent tragedies owing to implementation delays.

The PSA is, however, concerned about the DHA's indication that as part of general security changes, it will replace night-duty guards with alarm systems and armed response services. The PSA envisaged that the DHA would have learnt from recent attacks on state buildings, including courts and parliament, that the presence of on-site personnel is needed in support of alarm systems. The PSA is concerned about both employees and the protection of state resources. Security staff should be insourced to man buildings overnight and on weekends as alarm systems are not sufficient. Saving money by phasing out night and weekend shifts in the 2022/23-financial year exposes the DHA to criminal attacks as the presence of security officers is a strong deterrent for criminals.

The PSA has noted that the DHA will save some R6 million on cash-in-transit service providers. This money could be used to employ security staff to ensure security of personnel and infrastructure. The DHA is already paying vast amounts to security companies and the PSA advised the DHA to insource security officers in support of efficiency and better management of security services.

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