

MEDIA RELEASE

PSA welcomes PSC call for Limpopo to reinstate officials suspended longer than 60 days

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), welcomes the stance of Public Service Commission (PSC) calling on the Limpopo Government to abide by the 60-day rule and reinstate suspended officials. The Limpopo Provincial Departments have tendencies to suspend employees for periods longer than 60 days, despite the Disciplinary Code and Procedure, providing that the employer should hold a disciplinary hearing within a month or 60 days. These prolonged suspensions are either caused by the abuse of power, wherein employees are suspended for no justifiable cause or lack of capacity to conduct proper investigation.

The PSA has indicated in the past, that these failures to dispense disciplinary processes by departments, causes inefficiencies in the administration of public service. It must be noted that the departments have applied a subtle moratorium, wherein only critical posts are filled leaving, the employees stretched to do the work of those who left the services of the employer and those who are suspended. This increased workload for employees does not only cause burnout and strain, but also makes them prone to errors which leads to them being charged for misconduct. Subsequently, they are suspended, and it thus becomes a vicious cycle and a travesty of justice, which has the potential to paralyse the efficiency of the public service. The provincial government is paying millions of Rands to employees without rendering services, which are tantamount to wasteful expenditure as there is no value for money.

The observation by the PSC, that there is generally non-compliance with prescripts relating to the 60-day rule in Limpopo, is correct and confirms long held view by the PSA that the employer is using precautionary suspension as a tool to purge employees. The validity or legality of these suspensions is questionable as they are in contravention with the Disciplinary Code and have not been decided by the Chairperson. What is even worse is that in some cases, the employees were told that their suspension is lifted but must stay at home, a clear abuse of power and disregard for the law. The intervention by the PSC is welcomed and will relieve employees of pressure to execute the duties of colleagues, who are receiving salaries whilst staying at home. Furthermore, it will ensure the dispensation of justice to the employees who are the victims of injustice and power abuse.

The lack of consequence management has exacerbated this illegal practise, despite the continuous call by the Auditor General and labour to desist from the wastage of taxpayers' money, by paying huge salaries to employees who are not working. This practice has caused huge prejudice on employees who could not receive their benefits, such as grade progression and performance bonuses, owing to unjustifiable and reckless suspensions by Managers who think that they are law unto themselves.

The PSA welcomes the decisiveness of the PSC to put a stop to this lawlessness in the province.

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