

MEDIA RELEASE: Budget Speech 2019: War against public servants

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EMBARGO: None

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Controversial announcements on 20 February 2019 by the Minister of Finance in his 2019 Budget Speech regarding various methods to reduce the Public Service wage bill over the next three years is regarded by the Public Servants Association (PSA) as a declaration of war against loyal public servants by an untrustworthy employer.

Minister Tito Mboweni announced during his speech that the first step in this process will be to “allow older public servants who want to do so, to retire early and gracefully” with estimated savings R4.8 billion in 2019/20, R7.5 billion in 2020/21 and R8 billion in 2021/22. The Minister also announced that these actions will, “in time be complemented by limits on overtime, bonus payments and pay progression. The Minister further referred to “unjustified staffing” at diplomatic missions that should be reviewed urgently.

“From these statements, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Public Service have clearly declared war on public servants. Whilst plans for early retirements were previously denied publicly, it is clear that the employer cannot be trusted as it was stated that the details of the early retirement framework already be outlined during the course of the week. The Minister failed dismally to acknowledge the real reasons for the country’s economic crisis. There has not been any arrest or effort to recoup money from his comrades who have been implicated in corruption. Instead, public servants must ‘gracefully’ pay the price for this by sacrificing on agreed terms and conditions of employment,” said PSA General Manager, Ivan Fredericks.

The PSA indicated that, in the absence of any involvement by labour by means of the relevant bargaining structures to date, the Minister’s announcements are regarded as a misplaced effort to further cover up the effects and protect culprits of corruption that have been eroding the Public Service and society.

“The noble announcement by Minister Mboweni that ‘as a gesture of goodwill, members of Parliament and provincial legislatures and executives at public entities will not be receiving a salary increase this financial year’, is therefore scorned by the PSA as merely adding insult to injury,” said Mr Fredericks.

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