

MEDIA RELEASE: Strike action looming in SARS as wage negotiations deadlock

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EMBARGO: None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing 5 361 members working for the South African Revenue Services (SARS), has served the employer with a notice to embark on strike action, following the failure to reach an agreement on the wage negotiations. The PSA represents almost 50% of SARS employees. “The strike action is as a result of prolonged wage negotiations between parties, that unfortunately could not be resolved, despite the intervention by the Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA). The negotiations started in November 2018 and parties could not reach an agreement for the past 4 months. The PSA submitted an internal dispute to resolve the matter without any success. As a result, the PSA had no option but to declare a dispute to the CCMA. A certificate of non-resolution was subsequently issued after the conciliation failed,” said PSA General Manager Ivan Fredericks.

The failure by parties to reach an agreement resulted in the CCMA, issuing a certificate indicating that the dispute remains unresolved and a notice was subsequently served on the employer to embark on a strike. Should the employer want to avert the strike action they would need to address the following demands of our members:

- Salary increase of 11.4%
- Single-term agreement
- Recognition of improved qualification/bursaries
- Long service awards
- Family responsibility leave cycle
- Annual leave
- Pre-natal and vaccination leave
- Pay progression

“The PSA will not allow that the mismanagement of public funds, whether it be at SARS or any other State-Owned Entities (SOEs), to result in the reduction of current members benefits,” added Mr. Fredericks. Owing to the reduction in the grant allocated to SARS, the employer already proposed that certain benefits be withdrawn from members, and the PSA believes that this contributed to the current situation where parties could not conclude on the wage negotiations. “It is time that the Minister of Finance to reward employees for the exemplary work that they are doing under extremely challenging conditions and rather provide for an adequate budget at SARS instead of continuously bailing out non-performing SOEs,” said Mr. Fredericks.

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