

MEDIA RELEASE	Public Service Day: PSA calls for capable, ethical, and worker-centred public service
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) joins the international community in commemorating Public Service Day to recognise the value of public service and the contribution of public servants to development, democracy, and effective governance.

On this Day, observed annually on 23 June, the PSA honours public servants across South Africa who continue to keep the state functioning, often under difficult conditions. Public servants in health, education, policing, correctional services, social development, labour, justice, home affairs, administration, ICT, and other sectors remain central to service delivery and social stability.

Public Service Day must, therefore, be more than a ceremonial recognition. It must be used to confront systemic challenges that continue to undermine public servants and weaken service delivery. These include chronic understaffing, unsafe workplaces, excessive workloads, poor infrastructure, budget constraints, corruption, weak governance, and unfair public attacks on the integrity of public servants.

The PSA has consistently rejected reckless claims that public servants are overpaid or incompetent. Such generalisations ignore the realities faced by employees who are expected to deliver quality services despite vacancies, limited resources, rising living costs and increasing pressure from communities. Public servants cannot be used as scapegoats for failures caused by poor planning, corruption, cadre deployment, budget cuts, and weak leadership.

The PSA welcomes recent amendments to the *Public Service Act* as a step towards strengthening governance, accountability, and efficiency in the public service. Implementation must be done through meaningful consultation with organised labour, proper guidelines, adequate training, and clear communication. Public-service reform must not become a top-down exercise that creates uncertainty for employees or weakens hard-won labour rights.

The PSA continues to advocate for safe and healthy workplaces, proper staffing, fair remuneration, ethical leadership, and stronger accountability.

The PSA has further called for urgent training and clear governance frameworks on new technologies such as artificial intelligence to ensure that innovation supports workers and improves service delivery without exposing employees or institutions to unnecessary risk. A capable state cannot be built on demoralised employees, unfunded mandates, vacant posts, and unsafe workplaces. Supporting public servants is a direct investment in communities, democracy, and national development.

On Public Service Day, the PSA calls on government to move beyond symbolic appreciation and commit to practical action that strengthens public institutions, protects workers, and restores public confidence in the state. The PSA will continue to defend public-sector employees' rights, promote fair labour practices, strengthen worker representation, and advocate for a professional, ethical, adequately resourced, and people-centred public service.

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