

MEDIA RELEASE	SAPS prolonged suspensions: PSA demands expedited dispute resolution processes
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) notes with extreme concern the alarming state of disciplinary processes in the South African Police Service (SAPS), particularly the growing number of employees who remain on suspension for periods exceeding six months.

Recent parliamentary disclosures confirm that 233 SAPS employees were placed on suspension between April 2024 and October 2025, with many of these cases remaining unresolved for prolonged periods. These figures, whilst indicative of disciplinary enforcement, simultaneously expose systemic delays in finalising cases, delays that are inconsistent with the spirit and prescripts of South African labour law.

The PSA is concerned that suspensions are increasingly being used as a default administrative measure rather than a precautionary and time-bound intervention. In practice, this has resulted in SAPS employees remaining on suspension well beyond the generally accepted threshold of 60 days to six months, without resolution of their cases. South African labour jurisprudence is unequivocal on this matter. The principle that “justice delayed is justice denied” has been affirmed in numerous judgments, including *Queenstown Fuel Distributors CC v Labuschagne NO & Others* and *Toyota SA Motors (Pty) Ltd v CCMA & Others*, where the courts emphasised the necessity of expeditious disciplinary processes and procedural fairness. Prolonged suspensions undermine both.

The *Labour Relations Act (LRA)* provides for expedited dispute resolution mechanisms through institutions such as the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration and bargaining councils, including the Safety and Security Sectoral Bargaining Council (SSSBC). These mechanisms are designed to ensure that labour disputes, particularly those affecting livelihoods, are resolved without undue delay. It is, however, evident that in the SSSBC these expedited processes have not been adequately utilised and enforced, to the detriment of affected employees. This failure perpetuates a system where workers are left in a state of uncertainty, reputational harm, and financial distress. The implication of prolonged suspensions are severe and multifaceted. It includes financial strain, despite partial or full remuneration, owing to stalled career progression and loss of allowances. Psychological and emotional distress, including anxiety, stigma, and deterioration of mental health is experienced. The reputational damage is often irreversible, even if employees are later exonerated. It further results in operational inefficiencies in the SAPS, as experienced personnel are removed from active service for extended periods.



The PSA wishes to place on record that, although the Union is currently not admitted as a party to the SSSBC, it retains full organisational rights, including the right to represent its members in disciplinary and dispute resolution processes. The PSA has consistently demonstrated its commitment to effective, time-bound, and legally compliant representation of employees. The PSA therefore calls on the SAPS management to prioritise the finalisation of all outstanding disciplinary cases, particularly those exceeding six months. The SSSBC and organised labour stakeholders are urged to actively enforce expedited dispute resolution processes as envisaged in the *LRA*, with accountability for systemic delays that undermine fair labour practices.

The PSA calls on all SAPS employees who find themselves subjected to prolonged suspensions to contact the PSA for assistance. The PSA is ready and capable to provide robust, legally sound, and proactive representation to ensure that SAPS employees' rights are protected and that justice is not delayed.

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