

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**South African Tourism Board: PSA warns Minister of Tourism to stop victimising or threatening whistle-blowers**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has learnt with disgust about the South African Tourism Board's (SATB) forensic probe into the leaking of information related to a confidential Tottenham Hotspur Football Club sponsorship.

The SATB's consideration of spending an exorbitant R1 billion on this senseless sponsorship deal is deplorable when considering realities in South Africa. Citizens are impacted by an energy crisis that is deepening water shortages in many communities. People are sharing polluted water with animals and businesses are failing owing to load shedding. Potholes are now permanent features of roads and critical infrastructure is crumbling. Under current circumstances, it is completely misplaced for the SATB to insult struggling South Africans with this ridiculous donation to a foreign-based football club.

The SATB is out of touch with reality and is only focused on shrouding itself in glory with this proposed deal. The launch of a forensic probe into the leaking of these "confidential" discussions adds to the senselessness of this matter. The SATB's attitude leaves much to be desired as it seems to think that it is not accountable to the country and wants to deal with whistle-blowers. The recent attack at Nelson Mandela University, which claimed the life of a bodyguard, and the brutal murder of the Gauteng Department of Health Chief Financial Officer highlight the risks of exposing crimes.

The CEO's statement that the person who leaked the information is un-African is further insulting as if it is African to steal and waste taxpayers' money. Many employees are continuously intimidated and victimised when standing up for the truth. Whistle-blowers are seen as 'rats' that must be dealt with, which makes law-abiding citizens hesitant and even scared to expose crime and corruption.

The PSA urges the Minister of Tourism to intervene and stop this irrational and wasteful forensic probe as the outcome of the investigation is not in the interest of South Africa. Such persecutions must not happen if the country hopes to rid itself of the scourge of crime and corruption. A crime-free country with sound infrastructure is what will boost tourism. The protection of whistle-blowers remains key and central to the fight against corruption. The interests of the country and its citizens must be prioritised over self-enrichment schemes disguised as government programmes to improve the country.

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