

FOR PSA MEMBERS: GENERAL 18/2021

07-07-2021

PSA Day: 7 July 2021 - PSA remains principled and strong

The PSA's centenary year was commemorated during an unprecedented period in the history of the PSA and the world. It sounded a warning that the world as we knew it has changed irrevocably.

<https://tinyurl.com/y9c2pbse>

Whilst celebrating 101 years in service of public-sector employees on 7 July 2021, the PSA must consider the future. The future cannot be predicted. People and organisations must be flexible and adaptable to cope with fast-changing circumstances. Recent developments must be noted with due consideration. The world of work is changing rapidly. Some of those changes came as a direct result of the threat that unions pose to capitalism and big business. Atypical employment is the order of the day with outsourcing and agentising to minimise unions' power. Permanent posts are left vacant and contract workers are appointed to fill the gaps. This leads to insecurity in employment and makes it difficult for unions to organise such workers. While there is no formal moratorium on employment in the Public Service, the employer is also utilising vacancies to balance ever-shrinking budgets and please rating agencies and international banks.

Unfortunately, it places pressure on overworked public servants, especially those who are working under extreme pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has changed the world of work irreversibly and a new normal has arrived. The PSA kept pace with technology and could continue with services during the hard lockdown. The PSA's adaptability as one of the technologically advanced unions has ensured the successful protecting and promotion of members' rights and interests.

One of the PSA's main concerns is the well-planned onslaught on collective bargaining by the custodian of collective bargaining in our country, namely government itself. This started with the non-implementation of 2020-salary increases, despite written assurance by the Minister that there was commitment to comply with the terms of the agreement. After the PSA took the non-implementation to Court, the fabricated excuse was that the Minister of Finance had not approved the expenditure linked to the agreement. This, after the agreement had already been implemented for the first two years of the three-year period. Government's intention is to erode collective bargaining gains made by labour over the past ten years. The PSA was instrumental in achieving these gains and will ensure that these are not taken away by an unscrupulous employer.

The PSA has referred the matter to the Constitutional Court where it will be heard on 24 August 2021. This case is about much more than just the honouring of collective agreements. It is about protecting the negotiated collective bargaining dispensation with engagement by social partners at its heart to ensure labour peace through the signing of agreements. A South Africa, where employers and labour cannot trust each another to engage in collective bargaining as there is no trust in collective agreements, is hard to imagine. The right to collective bargaining and collective agreements originate from the Constitution and are the cornerstones of labour peace. No party can be allowed to break this system. The PSA will protect the process of collective bargaining, not only for its members, but for all South African workers.

To add insult to injury, Government approached the current Public Service salary negotiations with a closed wallet. Proposing to public servants to pay their own salary increase of 1.5% from their own pay progression, thereby offering no real wage increase. The PSA declared a dispute and invoked dispute resolution remedies. The PSA will follow members' mandate and do the necessary to ensure a fair salary increase. The PSA, in utilising legal remedies to its disposal, will continue to lead labour in South Africa by being principled and strong. The PSA will continue to act according to its values of loyalty, transparency, respect, integrity, consistency, and service excellence.

Thank you for your valued trust and support in the Union of Choice!

Join the PSA for *#PSAPowerHour* via this link <https://bit.ly/3hLqLWH>

GENERAL MANAGER