

PSA responds to SONA

The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 240 000 public sector employees, acknowledges President Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered last week.

While the PSA welcomed the President's emphasis on unity, cooperation, and economic recovery, the union said they remained concerned about the practical implementation of key policies, particularly

those that directly impact public servants and the broader working class.

The President's announcement that the remains of 14 South African soldiers who tragically lost their lives in the Democratic Republic of Congo will be returned home is acknowledged as a meaningful step towards closure for their loved ones and a recognition of their service to the nation. The PSA honours the courage and sacrifice of these soldiers.

The PSA fully supports the call for a government that works for the people, built upon a professional, ethical, and competent public service. Government's commitment to strengthening the Public Service Commission and improving graduate recruitment must, however, be coupled with tangible action. Public servants continue to face significant challenges such as understaffing, wage stagnation, and the erosion of collective bargaining rights.

These systemic issues undermine the delivery of public services and contribute to growing dissatisfaction amongst employees.

Any efforts to professionalise the public service must therefore include fair and equitable compensation, job security, and meaningful engagement with unions.

The President's focus on reforming municipalities and local government is long overdue. The PSA has repeatedly raised concerns about deteriorating service delivery, financial mismanagement, and corruption at municipal level. The proposal to establish professionally managed, ring-fenced utilities for water and electricity services is welcomed.

The PSA, however, stresses that this will only succeed if there is strong accountability and a commitment to eliminating political interference in these essential services. Without proper governance and management, these initiatives risk being undermined.

The PSA acknowledges government's intention to invest over R940 billion in infrastructure over the next three years, which is essential for boosting the economy. Whilst infrastructure development is crucial, it will not be sufficient to address South Africa's high unemployment rate.

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