

Public Servants' Association calls for probe into 'maladministration' in office of public protector

BY ANDISIWE MAKINANA - 09 January 2020 - 14:52

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Image: Simphiwe Nkwali

The labour union claiming to represent the majority of the public protector's employees wants parliament to launch an investigation into alleged maladministration at the Chapter Nine institution.

The Public Servants' Association (PSA) has written to national assembly speaker Thandi Modise, asking her to launch an investigation after the recent suspension and dismissal of senior executives and investigators.

It also wants an investigation into the May 2018 appointment of Vussy Mahlangu as the institution's CEO. Mahlangu resigned from the position in December and is serving notice until the end of January.

The PSA made a request in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act in December for details of Mahlangu's appointment. He was previously dismissed from the department of rural development and land reform over a scandal involving a farm in Limpopo.

'Fallout' denied as public protector CEO Vussy Mahlangu resigns

The office of the Public Protector confirmed on Friday that its CEO, Vussy Mahlangu, had resigned.

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The union argued that it was in the public interest to know how he was appointed before he had cleared his name.

Parliament spokesperson Moloto Mothapo confirmed that Modise had received the association's request and said Modise would apply her mind and respond to the union with a decision.

In a press statement issued on Thursday, PSA deputy general manager Tahir Maepa said the advertisement for Mahlangu's position indicated that the successful candidate would have to obtain a security clearance.

“Mr Mahlangu, however, does not to date have a security clearance as result of his dismissal by a government department. The staff managed by Mr Mahlangu at the office of the public protector have obtained security clearance.”

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Maepa said the public protector should provide clarity to South Africans as to whether Mahlangu disclosed in his CV or during interviews that he was dismissed from the public service “owing to misconduct relating to dishonesty”.

“If not, the public protector needs to advise if she was aware of his previous disciplinary record before the appointment. If indeed so, the public protector needs to justify appointing Mr Mahlangu in the face of glaring knowledge and evidence and [because] the CEO position requires a person of integrity,” he said.

Maepa said the association submitted its questions to public protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane's office in December and gave the office until December 18 to respond, but was met by a request for an extension to respond by January 13.

Public protector spokesperson Oupa Segalwe had not responded to a request for comment at the time of publishing.