

MEDIA RELEASE

COVID-19: PSA appalled by Department of Correctional Services' decision to recall all staff

DATE 3 November 2020

EMBARGO None

ENQUIRIES communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 13 000 employees of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), is appalled by the Department's unilateral decision to recall all officials from 2 November 2020.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period the DCS and the PSA, after much debate, reached an agreement to reduce the manpower per shift system. The reduction of officials per shift was implemented as a proactive approach to stop the rapid spread of COVID-19 in the various Correctional Centres and to ensure that a second layer of officials is available should there be a need to quarantine a number of officials at once.

The PSA is extremely concerned that despite the National Steering Committee of Correctional Services, consisting of both labour and the employer, recommending that a reduction on personnel per shift should remain in force, the DCS National Commissioner unilaterally revoked this decision and recalled all staff with effect from Monday, 2 November 2020.

The PSA believes that this decision is premature and will sacrifice the hard-earned gains made over the past months. It is inevitable that Correctional Centres will experience a second wave of COVID-19 infections. Coupled with the current shortage of officials, any large-scale quarantines will leave remaining staff severely exposed to being overrun by offenders.

The PSA calls on the DCS National Commissioner to retract his instruction for all staff to return to work and implement the rotation system to ensure stability in Correctional Centres.

END

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of a blue wave that transitions into a green triangle on the right side.