

MEDIA RELEASE **Human Rights Day 2021: Not much to celebrate**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), on Human Rights Day, pays tribute to public servants who are at the forefront of ensuring that the rights of citizens, as enshrined in the Constitution of the country, are upheld.

At the helm of these efforts are health and social workers, police officers, educators, administrators and a range of other occupations as custodians of services that aim to improve the lives of citizens. The PSA, however, remains deeply concerned about Government's continued mismanagement of state resources and the direct impact this has not only citizens, but also the workers who are expected to provide services under often poor and dangerous working conditions.

Since 2020, more strain has been placed on public services with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Public servants were and continue to be at the frontline, risking their personal safety and health, as the country battles the pandemic. More than 2 000 public servants have lost their lives to COVID-19 in the line of duty whilst the billions of Rands assigned to procure personal protective equipment that have been misappropriated could have prevented many of these losses.

The PSA condemns all acts of corruption, fraud and financial waste by Government of which the impact is spilling over into society as students plea for affordable education, and public servants are denied negotiated salary increases. Unemployment continues to soar, violent crime is rampant and citizens suffer owing to poor service delivery by municipalities. Unabated bailouts of collapsed state-owned entities such as SAA, Eskom, Denel, Prasa continue to burden the fiscus. On the other hand, the inability of these institutions to perform as well as the demise of some bus companies are severely affecting the pockets of most workers.

For more than a century, the PSA has taken the lead in not only exposing human rights violations in workplaces, but also in ensuring real improvements to workplace conditions. The PSA repeats it calls on Government to strengthen efforts to combat and eradicate fraud, corruption, and misadministration of public resources as these scourges are robbing citizens of basic human rights.

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