



**MEDIA RELEASE** PSA alarmed by Department of Correctional Services' failure to address critical issues

**DATE** 29 November 2024

**EMBARGO** None

**ENQUIRIES** Reuben Maleka  
082 903 6808 / 082 428 5734

Claude Naiker  
082 880 8950

---

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the Department of Correctional Services' (DCS) persistent failure to address critical issues affecting DCS employees.

Despite these matters being escalated to various platforms, including the Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald, with no tangible progress has been made. The appointment of Dr Groenewald as Minister of Correctional Services following the establishment of the Government of National Unity on 30 June 2024, raised expectations amongst PSA members. It was hoped that his appointment would result in improvements in working conditions and governance at the DCS. However, despite assurances provided during a meeting with the PSA on 4 October 2024, concerns raised remain unresolved.

Amongst pressing issues is the 1.5% pay progression shortfall, which has left some 3 000 employees underpaid owing to the incorrect implementation of General Public Service Sectoral Bargaining Council Resolution 1/2022. This miscalculation has resulted in inaccurate salary notches and erroneous 2024-salary adjustments. The PSA demands urgent corrective action, including the adjustment of salary notches, payment of the 1.5% shortfall, and retroactive salary adjustments from 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024. Gaps in promotion policies have also negatively impacted long-serving employees who have reached the ceiling of their salary bands, excluding them from benefiting from the 1.5% pay progression. This places them at a financial disadvantage. The PSA has proposed that the DCS implements mechanisms to ensure these employees also benefit from progression opportunities. Another unresolved issue involves production-level employees wearing insignias that do not align with their ranks owing to the inactivity of the task team responsible for this matter. The PSA calls on the Minister to revive the task team and finalise the alignment of insignias without further delay.

Chronic understaffing at correctional facilities poses significant risks to employees' safety and security. The staff shortage has contributed to an increase in gang violence and staff injuries. The PSA urges the Minister to address this matter urgently by ensuring an equitable ratio of correctional officers to offenders. In addition, the PSA calls for strict oversight by the Commissioner's Office and the enforcement of consequence management for managers who abuse their authority by initiating baseless disciplinary actions against employees.

The DCS has for more than eleven years failed to finalise a working document on shift patterns, leading to ongoing frustration amongst employees.

The Minister must expedite the development and implementation of a practical shift system to address this long-standing issue. The DCS's employment equity plan also falls short of addressing inequalities, particularly the underrepresentation of people with disabilities and youth in senior management roles. The PSA calls for a comprehensive review of the employment equity plan to ensure fair representation and equitable opportunities for all groups, particularly at management level.

The PSA is alarmed by the apparent lack of urgency by the DCS in resolving these critical issues. The PSA calls on the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services and the President to intervene decisively. The welfare of DCS employees, as well as the overall security and effectiveness of correctional facilities, cannot be allowed to deteriorate any further.

END