

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA applauds axing of Eastern Cape Health MEC, Ms Sindiswa Gomba**

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EMBARGO                                        None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the axing of Eastern Cape Health MEC, Ms Sindiswa Gomba, as she faces criminal charges for her alleged role in the Nelson Mandela funeral corruption scandal, while she was the Buffalo City Metro Deputy Mayor. Under her leadership, the Department has failed to deliver on its mission to provide and ensure accessible, comprehensive, and integrated services in the Eastern Cape. Her incompetence is well documented including the R10 million scooter ambulance tender scandal, which was discontinued after public outcry. She was further found wanting in the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although the allegations are not related to her current role as the MEC, those in public leadership positions must be beyond reproach to espouse public trust. Corruption is like cancer that is destroying the public service hence it must be treated with the seriousness it deserves. The PSA respects the rule of law that 'everyone is innocent until proven guilty', however, the allegations are of a serious nature and cannot be ignored. It must be noted that the Department is facing multiple challenges ranging from dilapidated infrastructure, unfilled vacancies, and constant rise in Covid-19 infections hence attendance of court proceedings would have divided her attention. Allowing the MEC to continue in her role would have sent wrong message to the public and set a wrong precedent that stealing from a public purse is acceptable.

The PSA notes the appointment of the COGTA MEC Mr Xolile Nqatha as her replacement in the interim. The PSA hopes that Mr Nqatha will address the challenges faced by the Department including the high rate of vacant positions and prioritise the smooth roll-out of the vaccine without any hindrances.

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