

**MEDIA RELEASE**                      **PSA calls for urgent intervention to stop abuse of suspension policy by Office of Premier in Eastern Cape**

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**EMBARGO**                                None

**ENQUIRIES**                             communication@psa.co.za

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The Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) strongly condemns the troubling and unacceptable practice by the Office of The Premier (OTP) in the Eastern Cape of using precautionary suspension as a punitive tool against employees.

Precautionary suspension is intended solely for investigation purposes, where the employer suspects that the employee in question might intimidate witnesses or tamper with evidence. The OTP has, however, flagrantly misused this provision. The Director of Finance has been on suspension since October 2022, despite the conclusion of the investigation in the same year and the disciplinary hearing in August 2023. Astonishingly, the Director remains suspended to this day, with no explanation provided by the OTP.

These suspensions come with full salary, signalling that the OTP is content to keep a senior official at home with full pay. As the OTP oversees more than ten departments, a reasonable employer would have sought alternative placements for employees, should suspension have been deemed necessary. In another alarming case, the OTP suspended an Assistant Director in October 2024 after the manager allegedly arrived two minutes late. Security was called to remove the manager from the workplace, following the OTP's unilateral decision to suspend the employee for tardiness. Employees have even been suspended for borrowing money from colleagues.

This abuse of precautionary suspension provisions has already cost taxpayers more than R2 million, with employees being paid to be at home. The PSA calls for an immediate re-evaluation of these practices at the OTP. The PSA urges a return to ethical conduct, fiscal responsibility, and transparency to restore public trust in government institutions. The PSA remains steadfast in advocating for accountability and responsible governance.

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