

MEDIA RELEASE

PSA concerned about financial crisis at Department of Correctional Services affecting payments of basic allowances

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ENQUIRIES

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is outraged by the continued failure by the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) to comply with binding agreements and its blatant disregard for the rule of law.

The PSA, representing thousands of DCS employees, strongly condemns the irresponsible actions by the DCS, which place an unfair financial burden on employees and threaten the stability of the correctional system. The PSA previously referred to a dispute against the DCS regarding the failure to implement pay progression as required by a Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) resolution. In January 2025, the PSCBC issued a compliance order, directing the DCS to implement the required pay progression within 14 days or formally request an extension. The DCS ignored this directive by neither implementing the pay progression nor requesting an extension. This wilful non-compliance is an insult to the rights of employees and demonstrates a complete disregard for lawful agreements.

The PSA further received alarming reports that in a further act of financial mismanagement, the DCS has deactivated critical payment codes on the Personnel and Salary Administration System (PERSAL), which will affect the payment of standby, night shift, and nurses' allowances. A recently issued circular confirms that overtime, standby, and night shift allowance codes have been deactivated, preventing any region from processing these payments. This reckless decision will have devastating financial consequences for employees and their families relying on these allowances to sustain their livelihoods.

The PSA issues a stern warning to the National Commissioner and the Minister of Correctional Services that this action is unacceptable and demonstrates gross mismanagement of funds. The DCS should have budgeted appropriately for these allowances. The PSA believes that the DCS has either underbudgeted or has mismanaged funds. The PSA demands immediate answers from the Minister in this regard. The directive blatantly violates the collective agreement that regulates overtime and these allowances. Expecting employees to perform critical duties without remuneration is unethical and poses a significant risk to the health and safety of inmates and employees.

By failing to allocate funds responsibly, the DCS is once again pushing its employees to the back foot, forcing them to start a new financial year with a budget deficit. DCS employees cannot sacrifice any more owing to their employer's incompetence.

The DCS, as part of the security cluster, is crucial in maintaining national security. The continuous failure by the DCS to comply with legally binding agreements and its mistreatment of employees, however, create instability in the correctional system and threaten public safety. The PSA refuses to allow that the Union's members are used as scapegoats for these ongoing failures.

The PSA strongly condemns this gross financial mismanagement, lack of leadership, and the apparent disregard for employees' rights by the DCS senior management. These actions further undermine labour relations and demonstrate a complete lack of competency and vision in the DCS.

The PSA urges the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services to urgently intervene and hold the DCS accountable for its repeated failures. The PSA is committed to protecting the rights and welfare of the Union's members and will pursue all available legal avenues to ensure that DCS employees receive what is rightfully owed to them. The PSA will not stand idly by whilst the DCS continues to disregard its obligations and put its employees at risk. The battle for fair treatment, improved working conditions, and a safer working environment for all DCS employees continues.

END