

MEDIA RELEASE

**PSA condemns abuse of power at Department of Correctional Service
and calls for legal costs to be recovered**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) had noted the recent Labour Appeal Court judgement where the Department of Correctional Services was lambasted for frivolous litigation and abuse of power after being locked in a labour dispute with a senior manager since 2016.

The Department spent millions of rands in legal fees despite pursuing and unwinnable, costly case as there were repeated rulings in favour of the employee at different platforms. The Judge correctly pointed at the fact that Department litigated with the backing of the national purse whilst the employee suffered financial loss as he had to incur legal costs at every step. The Department subjected the employee to number of invalid and unlawful suspensions, which was a clear abuse of power. This practice is causing the Department unnecessary financial loss, undermines the integrity of the public service, and diverts essential funds from critical services.

The misuse of state resources and pursuit of selfish and personal agendas cannot be tolerated. Whilst the PSA welcomes the cost order against the Department, it must hold those behind these unnecessary litigations accountable. Legal action should be undertaken in the interest of justice and not as a means to exert undue influence and control. Access to the public purse should not be seen as an opportunity to violate the rights of others and advance a personal agenda in the name of the Department.

The PSA urges the Department to implement stricter policies and oversight mechanisms to prevent future abuses and ensure that state resources are used effectively and ethically. Decision makers must be held personally liable for their actions to prevent the abuse of power.

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