

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA condemns outsourced printing of Grade-12 question papers at astronomical costs of more than R2.6 billion
DATE	12 November 2024
EMBARGO	None
ENQUIRIES	communication@psa.co.za

The Public Servants Association (PSA) has learned with shock that the printing of Grade-12 question papers has been outsourced at a cost of more than R2.6 billion, despite the Government Printing Works (GPW) being fully capable of executing this task.

The PSA condemns the decision and questions why government would not trust its own institution and opt to use private service providers at a vast amount whilst constantly pleading poverty when it comes to salary increases for its employees. This expenditure raises serious concerns about fiscal responsibility and the prioritisation of public funds.

The reason presented for the decision was the prevention of paper leaks. This points at inefficiency at the GPW owing to an incompetent management. Funds allocated to this outsourcing could have been utilised to enhance educational infrastructure, retain much needed teachers, and improve learning conditions for learners. Rather, an opportunity was created to dip into the public purse as there is no logical explanation on how such astronomical costs were approved.

The PSA calls for a forensic investigation into this matter as the same *modus operandi* of stealing government money through overpricing by unscrupulous service providers seems to be at play. Obtaining three quotations is a basic legal requirement that is met by many departments, but the devil is in the detail. There seems to be no compliance with due diligence in terms of cost analysis and pricing, thus creating fertile ground for wasteful expenses. Recent Auditor-General reports showed that billions were wasted owing to a lack of control systems.

The PSA urges the Minister of Basic Education to take the public in confidence and share how such a decision was made to outsource the printing of exam papers and provide reasons for GPW not been responsible to print Grade-12 question papers. If there are problems with control measures at the GPW, incompetent managers must be removed to ensure that the squandering of South African taxpayers' money is stopped.

END

