

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	<b>PSA demands urgent action to address systemic failures at Government Printing Works</b>
<b>DATE</b>	8 November 2024
<b>EMBARGO</b>	None
<b>ENQUIRIES</b>	communication@psa.co.za

---

The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the ongoing crisis at the Government Printing Works (GPW) and the apparent disregard for accountability and transparency at senior management level.

The PSA has for a considerable period been raising serious concerns about misconduct, maladministration, and mismanagement under GPW CEO, Alinah Fosi. Despite sending three letters requesting a meeting with the Minister to present evidence of these issues, the PSA not received a response. The Minister of Home Affairs' absence from recent Portfolio Committee oversight visits to the GPW further underscores this troubling lack of engagement.

Whilst the Minister has attributed GPW's challenges to external factors, such as dependency on the State Information Technology Agency and facilities managed by the Department of Public Works, his refusal to engage with the PSA to provide insights on the GPW's internal management issues, indicates a limited understanding of the root causes. The GPW system collapsed in 2020 owing to ignored warnings by the former Chief Information Officer (CIO) who foresaw the system's vulnerabilities. Despite management support, Ms Fosi disregarded the CIO's recommendation for urgent capacity support, and the system later failed as predicted. This leadership failure cannot be blamed on external agencies or infrastructure constraints.

The PSA is dismayed by the pattern of blame-shifting, with everyone and everything else being held accountable, except Ms Fosi. Allegations of harassment, non-compliance with supply-chain protocols, and theft have been raised, yet these issues continue to be overlooked by executive authorities. It is concerning that both the current and former Ministers seem to shield Ms Fosi, despite mounting evidence implicating her in the GPW's failures.

The latest contempt of court application filed by the South African Restructuring and Insolvency Practitioners Association (Saripa) amplifies the urgency of reforming the GPW's operations. Delays in publishing legal notices, which are critical to the legal and economic processes of South Africa, have created cascading disruptions. Insolvency practitioners face repeated publication costs, with funds for creditors, employees, heirs, and the South African Revenue Service delayed owing to the GPW's failures. Saripa has highlighted the GPW's ineffective manual processes, unresponsiveness, and unreliable quotation systems, further demonstrating that these issues stem from poor management rather than external dependencies.

These developments raise the question of whether there is a deliberate attempt to destabilise the GPW's operations, potentially paving the way for privatisation.

The PSA strongly opposes such a move as privatising such an essential national service could jeopardise the security and integrity of South Africa's critical printing operations.

The PSA urges the Minister to prioritise stability at the GPW by meeting with the PSA and other stakeholders. The PSA calls for immediate, transparent action to address systemic management failures at the GPW, implement rigorous reforms, and safeguard the GPW's role as a reliable provider of public services. A collaborative approach is essential to restoring the GPW's operational integrity, ensuring accountability, and protecting the public interest.

END