

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA ready to sign "interim" Public Service wage agreement
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The Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA), representing more than 230 000 public servants, will accept the interim Public Service wage offer after having finalised its mandating process on 22 July 2021.

Salary negotiations on annual increases due on 1 April commenced in the Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) on 1 March 2021. This process held public servants in anticipation of the outcome of the negotiations as the same employer who made this offer, did not honour the previous year's agreement and failed to implement negotiated increases in terms of PSCBC Resolution 1/2018. That matter is due to be heard by the Constitutional Court on 24 August 2021. With the 2021-negotiations being eroded by mistrust, the process was cumbersome and failed to yield an agreement that could be presented to members with the confidence that it will be implemented. The PSA, as a result, moved to the dispute resolution process when negotiations failed and a deadlock was reached on the three-year, 0% offer by the employer.

Other unions continued in a facilitation process, and the PSA executed the mandate from its members to apply pressure for a better offer. The PSA went through PSCBC dispute resolution processes whilst being left in the cold with no offer being made to it to prevent looming labour unrest. A certificate of non-resolution was obtained, paving the way for legal strike action by the PSA. The PSA was set to serve the employer with a strike notice after its members voted in favour of such action to apply pressure on the employer to pay attention to employees' pleas for a salary adjustment to sustain themselves. The PSCBC, however, reconvened on 6 July 2021 and the employer presented a revised offer as a "stop-gap measure" to alleviate financial pressure on public servants. Clause 3.3 of the agreement provides that the cash allowance will remain in force until a new agreement is reached, indicating that the agreement does not respond to workers' demands and is regarded as a "temporary" measure in the absence of no agreement being reached on tabled salary demands.

The PSA and its members have witnessed the country's deepening economic crisis owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, looting of state coffers through corruption, sharp increases in inflation, the cost of food-related products as well as unrest and looting. The PSA has also noticed the impact of this situation on public servants who are feeling the compounded effects of not receiving a salary increase for two consecutive years. The PSA strives to assist in repairing the damage, trust, and decrease poverty without further damage to the economy.

The PSA, however, still maintains that government is taking too long in recovering money that was stolen from citizens through corruption. Public servants cannot be expected to pay for these sins. The PSA is determined to continue its efforts, in cooperation with other unions, to restore the integrity of the country and its Public Service. On this basis the PSA, on behalf of its members, will accept the employer's interim offer with the expectation that its standing demands will be taken forward through negotiations in the PSCBC.

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