

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA shocked by Free State Office of Premier's unlawful dismissal of long-serving employees**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is shocked and outraged by the conduct of the Free State Office of the Premier's unfair dismissal of employees.

This alarming event demonstrates a blatant disregard for legislation that relates to employment in South Africa and the constitutional rights of affected employees. The PSA is particularly disturbed by the apparent lack of appreciation for the provisions of the *Labour Relations Act (LRA)*, which clearly outline the rights of employees. Many of the dismissed employees have been employed by the Department for more than ten years, and the PSA believes that these terminations are unlawful and in contravention of section 198B of the *LRA*, which protects employees on fixed-term contracts.

The PSA requested an urgent meeting with the Premier to discuss this matter. A response was received from the acting Director-General, with little reassurance and only stating a consultation would be arranged with unions as soon as possible and that the Department is busy exploring possibilities and strategies to address the situation, whenever and however feasible. This vague response, lacking any concrete commitment or timeframe, exacerbates the situation for affected employees who are in a state of uncertainty, with no assurance about their future as their contracts are set to terminate on 30 September 2024. The lack of clarity and urgency by the Premier's Office in resolving this matter is deeply concerning and worsens the distress for these employees, who are facing unemployment.

It is concerning that the Free State Premier, despite already being in contempt of a High Court order, continues to act in defiance of courts and the law by unlawfully terminating these employees' contracts. This conduct is a gross violation of the legal rights of these employees and a worrying display of the Provincial Government's disregard for the rule of law.

The PSA urges the Free State Premier to immediately reverse these terminations and engage in constructive dialogue to resolve the matter in accordance with the law. The PSA is ready to take legal action, if necessary, to protect the rights of the Union's members. The PSA is committed to ensuring that justice is served and that the rights of workers are upheld, regardless of the position or authority of those who seek to undermine them.

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