

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA urges Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure to urgently address thousands of unoccupied and illegally occupied government buildings**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is alarmed by the fact that thousands of government buildings are vacant and illegally occupied, thus costing government and taxpayers vast amounts.

South Africa is suffering from hijacked buildings. Allowing buildings to remain unoccupied for prolonged periods creates an opportunity for illegal occupation. These illegal occupations point at poor security and access control at such government buildings. There is danger of these buildings being turned into criminal havens.

The PSA has urged the Department of Public Works to urgently address this matter, but the matter is being neglected. It emerged that the Department is even unable to provide exact figures of the number of buildings that are either vacant or illegally occupied. This inability reveals a general lack of efficiency and accountability by the Department resulting in the failure to ensure effective management of immovable assets.

Those who occupy these buildings illegally are robbing government of an opportunity to generate income. They also enjoy free water and electricity whilst many law-abiding citizens are struggling to access these services. In addition, buildings that costed government vast amounts are unoccupied owing to structural defects, raising serious concerns.

The PSA urges the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure to embark on comprehensive audit of the status of all government buildings. Illegal occupants must be ejected. Dilapidated buildings must be repaired, and vacant buildings must be advertised for rental. These buildings can be rented to public servants to enhance their quality of life. Alternatively, these buildings should be disposed of through auction to avoid further loss of potential income and free use of water and electricity.

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