MEDIA RELEASE **PSA welcomes absorption of remaining DCS learners**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 13 000 employees of the Department of Correctional Service (DCS), welcomes the decision by the DCS to absorb remaining learners who participated in the learnership programme.

In December 2020, the DCS decided not to absorb learners who participated in the programme and who underwent training at DCS Training Colleges to become Correctional Officials. The DCS again in March 2021 decided not to absorb learners who concluded their training in March 2021. The PSA held various meetings with a department and demanded that these learners be absorbed permanently in the Department. A decision was then made to permanently absorb the March 2021 group from 1 June 2021. This created an unfair situation against the December 2020 learner group.

After much insistence by the PSA, the National Commissioner agreed to also absorb the December 2020 learnership group from 1 August 2021. The absorption of this group will greatly assist the DCS to address current understaffing experienced at Correctional Centres. Despite these absorptions, which will bring a measure of relief, the PSA believes that the DCS is still severely understaffed and needs more than 10 000 additional Correctional Officials to ensure that the official-inmate ratio is compliant with Departmental prescripts and provides some form of safety in correctional centres for officials.

Correctional Officials' lives are at risk daily owing to staff shortages and the PSA repeats its calls for this situation to be addressed. The absorption of the learners will also address the growing unemployment situation the country is facing.

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