MEDIA RELEASE	**PSA welcomes SA Police Service recruitment drive to re-enlist former officers to boost detective capacity**
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the progressive and much-needed South African Police Service (SAPS) recruitment drive to re-enlist former officers with the aim to boost detective capacity.

The SAPS, like many other departments, face challenges related to staffing levels, attritions, and resource constraints as the inability to retain skilled detectives or to replace them with equally experienced officers has created an undesired vacuum. It was reported that the number of detectives has decreased from 26 000 to 17 000, thus limiting the ability by the SAPS to investigate crime and present winnable cases to the National Prosecuting Authority.

While welcome this initiative, the PSA stresses that it is equally important that it must be implemented with the skills-transfers approach to increase detective capacity in the SAPS. Such a mentoring programme will ensure that recently appointed officers optimally benefit from experienced officers and thus increasing the pool of officers with detective capacity.

Crime levels in South Africa are extremely concerning and the PSA has previously called on the Minister of Police to address staff shortages impacting on crime combatting, exacerbated by inadequate resources including working tools such a safety vests, motor vehicles, and inadequate infrastructure developments. It is not surprising that it was recently reported that the SAPS failed to meet its performance target where the Portfolio Police Committee Chairperson sharply raised concerns about continued inefficiency in the management of 10111 command centres that were crippled by a major failure to adequately provide human resources needed to manage these centres. A severe depletion of the detective services division was also highlighted. The DNA analysis backlog of some 70 000 cases further impairs the ability to prosecute gender-based violence and other serious crimes.

The PSA urges the Minister of Police to ensure that a holistic assessment of SAPS operations is conducted. Matters hindering the execution of the constitutional mandate to prevent, combat and investigate crime must be addressed. The SAPS must be empowered to maintain public order, protect, and secure citizens and their property whilst upholding and enforcing the law. South Africa cannot afford an inept police service as this has an adverse effect on the safety of citizens and investor confidence.

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