

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA welcomes SIU decision to refer Limpopo Department of Health PPE tenders to SAPS**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) welcomes the decision of the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) to refer 33 criminal cases to law enforcement in respect of a R25.2 million Limpopo Department of Health contract.

The PSA previously warned against looting taking place at the Department through manipulation and irregular awarding of contracts, which appear to be connected service providers, although this was disputed at the time. The urgency to procure personal protective equipment (PPE) was used to handpick service providers, including spouses and children of political leaders. The SIU investigation found that the R25.2 million tender awarded by the Limpopo Department of Health was invalid hence and it will approach the Special Tribunal to have the contract declared invalid and unlawful.

The Department did not respond even when the preliminary report by the Auditor-General (AG) confirmed that most PPE contracts were marred by possible fraud, irregularities, and inflated prices. The Department's failure to ensure consequence management when the AG reported payments for undelivered PPE without orders being placed and to non-tax compliant companies, promoted corruption and set a bad precedent.

It is trusted that the President who was furnished with the confidential report will ensure that those implicated in the report are exposed. The MEC and her HOD failed to oversee the process of PPE procurement and allowed the conclusion of invalid and illegal contracts amounting to R25.2 million. They did not expose those who practiced corruption and hid behind the continued SIU investigation. They should thus be held accountable. The PSA regards the referral of invalid and illegal contracts to the South African Police Service as a move in the right direction that will send a strong message to those benefiting unduly from government coffers. The looters must be prosecuted, and the state must recover the stolen money.

END

