

**MEDIA RELEASE** Public Protector lamed by budget cut: PSA urges Minister of Finance to reconsider

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**EMBARGO** None

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The Public Servants Association of South Africa (PSA) calls on the Minister of Finance to urgently lift cost-containment measures imposed on the Office of the Public Protector as these cuts are severely hampering the institution's ability to fulfil its constitutional mandate.

The Public Protector recently highlighted that severe budget cuts imposed by National Treasury have become a major obstacle in filling crucial Investigator positions. During a discussion at the bargaining forum, it was revealed that the 10% reduction in the budget, amounting to R37 million, has exacerbated the financial strain on the Office of the Public Protector. This shortfall is contributing to an existing backlog of cases and is also delaying the finalisation of important investigations.

The PSA is extremely concerned about the impact of these budget cuts, which could further discourage public trust in bringing grievances to the Public Protector's Office. As an institution established under Chapter 9 of the *South African Constitution*, the Public Protector plays a vital role in safeguarding democracy, promoting accountability, and ensuring that government actions are lawful and just. Any threat to its operational capacity undermines the ability to function as a critical check on state power.

The current staff shortages at the Public Protector place immense pressure on Investigators overburdened with caseloads. This delays the delivery of justice and has the risk of burnout for Investigators, which will further compromise the efficiency of the Public Protector's Office.

Given the Constitutional significance of the Office of the Public Protector, the PSA urges the Minister of Finance to reconsider the cost-cutting measures immediately. It is essential to restore the necessary funding to ensure that the institution can continue to serve the public, uphold the rule of law, and protect the rights of South Africans. At a time when accountability and transparency in governance are critical, the Public Protector must be empowered, not weakened, to fulfil its mandate effectively.

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