MEDIA RELEASE	**Rising unemployment: PSA raises grave concern**
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), as a major trade union for public-sector employees, is alarmed by the second-quarter report on South Africa's rising unemployment rates.

The statistics provided by Statistics SA are shocking. The increase in unemployment from 32.95% to 33.5% is the highest rate since 2022. It was reported that 8.4 million people who are now unemployed, compared to 5.2 million in 2014. More than 76% of people are unemployed. The number of youth and women who are unemployed is also extremely high. Women are mostly taking part in household duties such as child-caring and other responsibilities, which limit them to participate in the mainstream economy. Most jobs were lost in the agriculture and trade sector.

The country requires urgent intervention by government and the private sector to save the dismal situation. The country is in an extreme crisis in terms of unemployment rates. The economy will not grow if the situation remains the same or deteriorate even further. Poverty levels will soar as citizens cannot afford the cost of living, with food and electricity prices constantly increasing.

South Africa is under pressure across all fronts as the economy continues to struggle. Affordability factors such as high inflation and high interest rates should also be blamed for the negative economy. Employment prospects are not promising, especially for the youth.

The PSA urges government to reform labour-market policies to attract investments. In addition, the education system should be reviewed to improve skills development for the youth. The mismatch of skills with job opportunities must be curbed to support economic growth and reduce unemployment rates.

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