

MEDIA RELEASE **SARS strike: PSA rejects ridiculous wage offer and contemplates escalating strike action**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA), representing more than 5 400 South African Revenue Service (SARS) employees, has rejected the latest settlement offer by SARS to break the deadlock.

The last-minute offer by SARS of a 1.39%-salary increases and once-off cash payment was rejected by the Union's members. Subsequently, the PSA embarked on lunch-time pickets, followed by marches across the country on 25 and 26 May 2022 where the Minister of Finance and SARS management were issued with a memorandum of demands. They were given seven days to respond to the demands. The PSA notified SARS that the ridiculous offer remains rejected and a response is expected from SARS within seven days, as per the memorandum.

The PSA has temporarily suspended the strike to allow members to digest the offer and allow SARS to further consider the revised offer made. The PSA is, however, contemplating intensifying the strike action should SARS continue to disregard the plight of workers and demonstrate arrogance as displayed by the insulting offer of a meagre 1.39%-salary increase. The poverty plea by SARS is an insult to hard-working employees who exceeded the target by more than 20%.

Inflation currently stands at 5.9% and anything less than an inflation-related increase cannot be termed a proper salary increase. The phenomenon of once-off payments, as influenced by an obsession to contain employee costs owing to austerity measures, negatively affects service delivery.

The morale of SARS employees is extremely low. Increases in the price of fuel, food, electricity, and public transport, as well as repo rates increases have made it very difficult for workers who have received no real salary increase for two years. The PSA calls on SARS to table a proper salary-increase offer above the CPI, rather than once-off payment. The entire R500 million available should be allocated to the baseline increase and not once-off payments. The PSA further urges the Minister of Finance and the SARS Commissioner to urgently revise the salary offer to SARS employees who are confronted by escalating costs of living to avoid further service-delivery disruptions.

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