

Public servants' body plans indefinite strike

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Public Servants Association members demand higher wages during a march in Johannesburg. File Picture: SIMPHIWE NKWALI

The 230,000 strong Public Servants Association (PSA) is set to down tools on June 11, after its members rejected a wage deal offered by the government.

PSA GM Ivan Fredericks confirmed on Monday that the union had notified the Department of Public Service and Administration as well as the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council of its intention to strike.

The offer from the government includes wage increases of 6% to 7% for 2018 and consumer price index plus 1% for successive years. However, it still does not enjoy majority support from unions, more than a week after the government presented it.

Workers are demanding increases of 10%-12%.

Public Service and Administration Minister Ayanda Dlodlo has warned that the government would have to cut back on critical services if it failed to rein in pay increases, which stood at R587bn.

The strike will see members of the PSA down tools indefinitely pending further talks with the government.

"We have given notice to the director-general of the Department of Public Service and Administration as well as the secretary of the bargaining council," Fredericks said.

At present, he said, no talks were under way.

"It's a shutdown but we are not encouraging our essential service workers to go on strike like doctors and policeman, but we still have enough members to make an impact," he said.

"This is not the way we wanted things to pan out. We are fully aware of the consequences of strikes, but it is also the right of workers if the powers that be are ignoring us."

Thus far, the South African Democratic Teachers Union has agreed to the deal, but its 20% representation, combined with that of the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union, failed to cross the 50% + 1 threshold.

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