

MAYIBONGWE MAQHINA

MORE than 70 public servants have been paid a total of R24.5 million while sitting at home doing nothing as at June.

The Defence and Military Veterans Department paid out more than R15 809 504 to its 31 suspended employees while eight other departments coughed up a combined R8 710 252.

Some of the suspended officials have been sitting at home for periods ranging between four months and 11 years.

This was revealed in written replies by various ministers in response to questions posed by the

Public servants paid out R24m while doing nothing

Freedom Front Plus over the past two months.

The party's Pieter Groenewald yesterday described the expenditure as a waste of taxpayers' money.

"We acknowledge that there are certain labour relations laws, but the fact is that some in management take too long to take corrective steps against those public servants who contravene the rules.

"We say that is totally unacceptable. That is waste of taxpayers money," Groenewald said.

The Defence and Military Veterans leads with the highest number of officials on suspension.

It is followed by the Home Affairs Department.

Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said 23 soldiers and eight civilians were on suspension as at June.

"An estimated total amount of R17 169 717 has been paid to members and employees who are placed on leave on instruction," Mapisa-Nqakula said.

One of the soldiers has been paid R2 073 621 since his suspension 11 years ago.

Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba said 23 employees, mainly junior staff, were on suspension as at June.

"The total amount of cost attached to the days of service lost as a result of the suspensions is R1 068 490," Gigaba said.

National Treasury has forked out R2 348 246 for its four suspended officials, all top managers," Finance

Minister Nhlanhla Nene said.

Economic Development Minister Ebrahim Patel said his department paid R198 733 for a senior manager who has been on suspension for three months.

Minister of Higher Education Naledi Pandor said six officials were on suspension and the department paid them R363 949 as at June 2018.

Minister of Women Bathabile Dlamini said her department paid R3 305 362 for four senior managers and one of the officials has been on

suspension for almost two years.

Public Service and Administration Minister Ayanda Dlodlo said one official was on suspension in her department for more than three months.

Energy Minister Jeff Radebe said two officials were on suspension as at July.

The officials, one suspended with full pay in May 2017 and another in July 2017, have been paid a combined R2 687 736.

Health Minister Aaron Motsoal-

edi reported one suspension at a cost of R191 115.

The ministers of Arts and Culture, Justice and Correctional Services, Public Enterprises, Public Works, Communication Telecommunications and Postal Services reported zero suspensions.

Groenewald said the R24m on salaries of suspended officials could have been used on infrastructure or provision of much-needed services.

"There are numerous services the money could have been spent on. That we spend this money and no service is delivered by the person on suspension means it is fruitless expenditure because no services were delivered."