Dear Minister

The SABS closed its doors for the festive season today, Minister – while more than 500 employees suffer with anxiety about not being paid on 23 December. The competent leaders you have put in place cannot even get a pay day correct, never mind that we expect them to pay us correctly. The November payrun saw some people not getting paid at all, others getting double salaries, some getting less pay and others more pay. All these issues have not been resolved and at this stage, nobody even knows if their medical aid or pension funds are up to date. The management were not able to resolve any of the challenges and now – the company closes while our anxiety soars.

We cannot voice these concerns. There is no trust. Our union leaders have all been suspended – because they were trying to get us answers about the November and December pay dates. These bogus leaders you have been recycling for years do not give a damn about its employees or their families and there is no avenue to get answers. The people doing the work – they have no answers as this is a complete dictatorship and instructions get followed. People are too afraid to make rational decisions or to even challenge irrational ones – because the reality is that you will be moved into other roles or face some sort of victimization such as being suspended, or chastised in group meetings.

Every afternoon, there are ‘business continuity’ meetings – wherein the senior managers sit for hours and recycle the same thoughts and plans. The meetings are for the CEO and COO to hear their own voices and make it seem as though there is action. But there is nothing. The SABS continues to pull the wool over everyone’s eyes. Since November 20… the SABS leadership is yet to engage staff face-to-face about the cybersecurity incident – instead they hide behind a service provider and cannot even answer the most basic concerns.

These letters Minister, will continue to grow – because there is no channel to voice concerns, no channel to ask questions. The only person who appears to do anything is Mr Chance and we hope he will continue to without fear or favour. Grievances go unanswered or ignored. There is a squashing of whistleblowing. The doctor who was based at the SABS has been removed by the SABS leadership for more than 3 months… because they were unhappy that the stats were showing more than 40% of employees were being treated for emotional distress issues. Minister, since 2021 – employees have been shuffled and reshuffled – into new roles, mostly demoted – some into roles with no leaders. Every 6 months, there is a new CEO with a new modus operandi and more reshuffling.. it is incredibly stressful and it is so obvious that the SABS removes any coping mechanism and is intent on making the live of employees as miserable as possible.

Don’t get me wrong – there are a select few – we call them the qabbal… all of them are in acting positions or senior positions and mostly with the power to sign of contracts and suppliers. These few are perpetuating the state of chaos and rotate contractors, suppliers and vendors - with the express view to loot. It is still nonsensical that the accounting authorities were not disbarred from any management role for the fiasco of authorizing invoices totalling millions – where no work was done on the airconditioning systems. There is such obvious favouritism that occurs as well. For example, certain managers are permanently working from home and when they are confronted to investigate this there answer is 'there is no evidence' - yet some people get disclipinary sanctions for coming in late. Some senior people get suspended and face disciplinaries for not following rules and procedures - yet nothing happens to the HR manager who reveals salary information to everyone, or the audit manager who cause the incorrect payroll, or the client engagement manager who sends out incorrect client letters, or the current COO for losing accreditations, or the current security manager for not preventing the alleged threat to life of the executives.

More than just the employees facing a dismal festive season. Our cleaners.. more than 45 of them, employed by Mjo have been waiting for more than 6 months to hear the fate of a renewed contract or termination of employment. Even as the company shut down today, the 45 were miserable and unsure about their futures. The SABS has not communicated whether they should come back in January or not and Mjo does not know about whether they have a contract. These are 45, mainly women who need to take care of their familiies, secure school and university fees. How can SABS leadership be so reckless with people’s livelihoods? these are 3 years contracts.... why is there no disciplinary sanctions/suspensions on the acccountable officers for such injustices...

The ACEO has surrounded himself with armed guards because he was ‘threatened’ by a group of employees who wanted answers about pay day and pay runs. It is so ludicrous – especially when you consider that the same ACEO expects all other employees to come to work unprotected in such a threat. Our access control systems have not worked for months… anyone can just stroll into the building. The very same executives abuse our security and reception facilities by ordering takeaways and online shopping and the couriers and caterers are forever just randomly walking through the building, unescorted… even to the floors where the apparent threat to life occurred. It is so amazing that no employee was arrested, and there was a heavy police presence on the campus due to an NRCS strike… yet… nobody but the CEO was threatened. It is only the CEO that has a personal bodyguard. Poor guy, I hope you get him home security, helicopter travel and armed vehicles Mr Minister – because he will soon also demand a private island by the looks of things.

There has been a lot of hope placed at the doors of the Ministry for a long time. It is time to act. It is time to stop ruining the livelihoods of employees. We have a vested interest in making the SABS work and Minister, you cannot keep ignoring us.