Guyana Public Service Union

"RIGHTS AT WORK – ENDING POVERTY & INEQUALITY"

PRESIDENT: Mr. Patrick M. Yarde
GEN. SECTY: (ag) Mr. Kemton Alexander

Tel.: 225-0518; 225-4811, 225-9251. Fax: 226-5322
160 REGENT ROAD & SHIV. CHANDERPAUL DRIVE
P.O. BOX 10774, GEORGETOWN, GUYANA
E-MAIL: gpsu1923@yahoo.com
WEBSITE: www.gpsu.gy

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IN REPLYING PLEASE QUOTE DATE HEREOF AND No. PSU: 135/5

DATE: November 25, 2026.

CIRCULAR TO ALL MEMBERS.

TO: **All Members, Branch Executives, and Public Sector Workers**

FROM: **The Executive Council, Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU)**

SUBJECT: **URGENT UPDATE ON 2026 WAGE NEGOTIATIONS, GOVERNMENT DELAYING TACTICS, AND CALL FOR HEIGHTENED MILITANCY.**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Solidarity,

The Executive Council of the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) issues this urgent update on our ongoing efforts to secure a living wage and fair conditions of service amid an escalating cost of living and stalled negotiations.

1. What the GPSU Has Done Thus Far

The Union has consistently pursued legitimate, evidence-based, and legally grounded steps to improve compensation and working conditions:

- **Submission of an Empirical Basket of Necessities & Living Wage Methodology:** Rather than relying on arbitrary figures, the GPSU compiled and submitted a comprehensive Basket of Necessities alongside the National Public Sector Wages and Economic Stabilization Policy to establish a scientifically grounded baseline for a true living wage.
    - **Rejection of Outdated State Weightings:** We formally rejected the State's reliance on the outdated 2006 Consumer Price Index (CPI) weighting distribution, which severely understates the modern expenditure burden of working-class households.
    - **Household Consumption & Retail Price Auditing:** We built an itemized expenditure model reflecting the real monthly survival and dignity needs of a standard public servant household—covering food and nutrition, housing and rent, utilities, transportation, healthcare, education, and household

essentials—priced using verified retail market data collected between 2024 and 2026.

    - **Quantifying Real Cost-of-Living Erosion:** Longitudinal price tracking across this basket demonstrates that essential monthly household expenses surged by **67% between 2024 and 2026** (escalating from **GYD $161,950 to GYD $270,474** per month), driven by acute spikes in food and housing costs.
    - **Regional Cost-of-Living Indexing:** Our methodology incorporates specialized cost adjustments for hinterland and riverine workers to account for severe regional disparities in freight, transportation, and basic goods.

- **Early Demands and Budget Proposals (Sept 2025 – Jan 2026):** As early as **September 17, 2025**, the GPSU wrote to the Government requesting a review of the 2025 agreement due to the rising cost of living. Between December 2025 and January 2026, the Union followed up by formally requesting the mandatory review of 2025 adjustments and calling for 2026 talks, alongside preliminary budget proposals demanding a living wage anchored to the Basket of Necessities, grade rationalization (GS 1 to GS 3), de-bunching, increments, and tax relief.
- **Sustained Executive Engagement:** Throughout 2026, the Union repeatedly wrote to the Ministry of Public Service and President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali—including formal demands on **July 18, September 30, and October 19, 2026**—insisting on face-to-face bilateral negotiations rather than unilateral impositions.
- **Formal Salary Revision Proposals (November 18, 2026):** GPSU President Patrick Yarde submitted a comprehensive memorandum to Finance Minister Dr. Ashni Singh outlining structured options based on our cost-of-living analysis: a **20% increase plus a $15,000 flat-dollar adjustment** or a broader **35% cost-of-living adjustment**, alongside a **$140,000 monthly minimum threshold** and a new three-year agreement.
- **Defending Union Rights & Judicial Remedies:** We have actively challenged administrative overreach, securing judicial pronouncements against unlawful minimum wage impositions and confronting the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service, Government Efficiency and Implementation over the unlawful non-deduction and non-remittance of Union dues—a tactic aimed at undermining our financial assistance to members and distracting leadership from core representation.

2. Government Stalling Tactics & The Expired Multi-Year Agreement Rather than engaging in meaningful, good-faith collective bargaining, the administration has resorted to deliberate delays and public misrepresentation:

- **Serial Postponement of Negotiations:** Scheduled meetings to formally open wage negotiations were postponed by the Government on **four separate occasions**. Most tellingly, on the very day President Ali publicly announced that public sector salary increases would follow "multi-year agreements," a scheduled negotiation meeting with the Union was abruptly postponed—exposing a clear intent to bypass the bargaining table in favor of unilateral pronouncements.
- **Breach of Commitments:** The Government has failed to honor standing commitments for regular monthly engagement established under previous frameworks.
- **The Truth About the "Multi-Year Agreement":** Following President Ali's November 13, 2026 statement regarding multi-year agreements, the GPSU clarifies unequivocally that the previous agreement covered only **2024 (10%)** and **2025 (8%)** and expired at the end of 2025—leaving **zero percent negotiated for 2026**. Unilateral announcements cannot override the 1987 Agreement for the Avoidance and Settlement of Disputes, national labor laws, or **ILO Conventions No. 87, No. 98, and No. 151**, all of which have been ratified by the Parliament of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and remain in force.

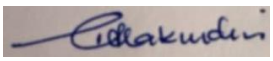
3. A Call to Action: Stand Ready for Heightened Militancy

The Executive Council calls upon all members and Branch Officers to take immediate action:

- **Heighten Vigilance:** Reject unilateral pay impositions and any misrepresentation of expired agreements.
- **Stay Informed:** Monitor official updates across the GPSU website, WhatsApp groups, circulars, newspapers, and online media.
- **Mobilize:** Attend all upcoming branch meetings and briefings to maintain unity and readiness.
- **Prepare for Action:** Stand ready for lawful industrial action—including protests, picketing, and the withdrawal of labor—should the Government continue to refuse good-faith collective bargaining.

Solidarity Forever!

Yours in the Struggle,



Indira Thakurdin
For Patrick M. Yarde
PRESIDENT/CEO
Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU)