16 October 2026

MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEGAL AID SA ACTIVATES CONTINGENCY PLAN TO MAINTAIN SERVICE PROVISION AMID RESUMPTION OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Legal Aid South Africa (Legal Aid SA) has on Wednesday, 14 October 2026, formally received the 48-hour notice issued by the South African Lawyers and Allied Workers Union (SALAWU), advising that industrial action will resume on Monday, 19 October 2026 until further notice.

The SALAWU has indicated that the action follows the suspension of the previous industrial action in June 2026 and its view that employees' demands have not been adequately addressed. The Union has requested that the Legal Aid SA Board and Executive Management receive a Memorandum of Demands between 11:00 and 13:00 on 19 October 2026.

Legal Aid SA acknowledges the concerns raised by employees and appreciates the engagements that have taken place to date. The organisation remains committed to meaningful engagement with the SALAWU while balancing employee-related priorities with its financial sustainability and statutory responsibility to provide legal services to vulnerable and indigent people.

Following receipt of the previous Memorandum of Demands, Legal Aid SA formally responded to the matters raised, including the retirement policy, structured consultation with organised labour, performance incentives, salary benchmarking, the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation, staffing capacity and workload management, disciplinary processes and governance matters.

The organisation has committed to strengthening structured engagement with the SALAWU through quarterly meetings, to be incorporated into the corporate calendar.

Legal Aid SA continues to operate under significant budgetary pressures over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period, with employee compensation accounting for a substantial portion of the required expenditure reductions. As a result, the organisation's capacity to implement certain employee-related initiatives and support measures remains constrained.

However, Legal Aid SA continues to engage with its Executive Authority and the National Treasury on the funding required to address all related priorities.

The organisation respects employees' constitutional rights to participate in lawful and protected industrial action. At the same time, it has activated appropriate business continuity measures to minimise service disruptions and maintain access to legal assistance and representation, as far as possible and within its means.

Legal Aid SA remains committed to constructive labour relations, while protecting its ability to fulfil its mandate of ensuring access to justice for the people of South Africa.

-Ends-

Issued by the Communication Department of Legal Aid South Africa

Note to Editors: Please attribute all comments to Legal Aid SA Spokesperson,
Ms Pateka Quwe

Visit our website at www.legal-aid.co.za or call the Legal Aid Advice Line on 0800 110 110

Please be reminded that the name of our organisation Legal Aid South Africa is correctly abbreviated as Legal Aid SA and not as LASA. We respectfully request that you use the correct abbreviation Legal Aid SA which is representative of our mission to deliver quality legal aid services to the indigent and vulnerable in South Africa.