

MEDIA STATEMENT

ATTENTION ALL JOURNALISTS/PRODUCERS

FOR IMMEDIATE COVERAGE

09/01/2024

NOT ALL 74 000 DECEASED RECIPIENTS WERE GHOST ACCOUNTS

The South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) is aware of the story aired on SABC 404 which stated that over 74 000 deceased recipients were wrongly paid by SASSA. This was revealed by Social Development Minister Lindiwe Zulu, in a written reply to a parliamentary question. As much as we are aware of some corrupt activities taking place which our Fraud and

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compliance unit is dealing with on a daily basis, as SASSA we can confirm that majority of this is not due to corruption but rather due to timing of reporting of death by the responsible family members vs the date on which SASSA Extracts Payments for the affected clients.

As part of the normal social grant payment extraction process, SASSA extracts payment beneficiary details and compare such details with the Department of Home Affairs on a monthly basis .Key purpose is to test if the beneficiaries are still alive or deceased. This process takes place just around the 22nd / 23rd of every month. In an instance that the client is found to be deceased, such a record is deactivated on the SASSA system prior to extraction of payment – no money is generated for such clients. This interface process with Department of Home Affairs as explained it is automated and it is executed on a monthly basis without exceptions.

When a client dies at their different residential areas, the only time on which SASSA gets to know if the client has died is when family members reports such death to SASSA or reports such to the Department of Home Affairs. In instances where death is reported late at SASSA or Department of Home Affairs, such eventuality can result in some payment being prematurely released. There are in instances where death is reported after a number of days from the actual date on which death would have occurred – this late reporting of death to the Department of Home Affairs or to SASSA results in exceptions for monies released prematurely. Unfortunately this element of late reporting of death, neither SASSA nor Department of Home Affairs has any control over it.

In addition to the above gate keeping mechanisms, SASSA conducts review of beneficiary personal details now and then to ascertain if the beneficiary circumstances are still the same. At the moment, Review process is conducted through a physical contact arrangement (face-to-face) between SASSA staff and the affected beneficiaries, and not virtually. If a client is not alive, such a client will not be able to present themselves for a review process.

The number of 74 000 deceased beneficiaries as reported in the media, is actually number of beneficiaries who were reported to have died in the past three years. Meaning that of the 18 million clients paid monthly by SASSA, there is an average of 2 055 clients that died on a monthly basis in the past three years whose circumstances could have been one of the few reasons outlined which are not in SASSA's control :

- Death reported late to Department of Home Affairs - days after the actual date of death. Whose date may have been after SASSA has extracted payment to the different bank accounts
- Death reported late to SASSA by family members days after payment was long extracted

The above therefore implies that the number of 2 055 clients represents a 0,01% of the total population paid by SASSA on a monthly basis .

SASSA cut-off payment date is the 22nd of every month and that will determine the payment of the deceased depending on the home affairs registration. SASSA is presently working tirelessly with the Department of Home Affairs to ensure that the systems are connected. This is to ensure that we curb corruption. SASSA has in the past worked closely with the HAWKS and other law enforcement agencies to curb corruption. We will continue to work with law enforcement agencies for the betterment of our organisation.

A fraud-prevention strategy, aligned to the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, has been implemented by SASSA and fraud awareness campaigns are conducted regularly to increase awareness.

END!

ISSUED BY SASSA

FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES CONTACT:

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