

To: All Media

Attention: News Editors/Social Development Writers

For immediate release

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SASSA Leaves No Stone Unturned to Fight Fraud on Social Grants System

The statement issued by a Member of Parliament calling for Minister Zulu and the CEO of SASSA to account on the more than 1 500 City of Johannesburg employees who were found to be in receipt of social grants refers. SASSA would like to clarify and place on record the following:

SASSA pursues an active fraud prevention strategy and has always exercised a zero tolerance to anyone who commits, or is complicit in fraud in the social grant environment. "It is precisely because of the implementation of this strategy that the City of Johannesburg employees were identified. In addition, SASSA and the City of Johannesburg have been co-operating on this matter since July 2020", said CEO Totsie Memela

Moreover, the active risk-based fraud prevention strategy pursued by SASSA led to the confirmation that there are 4 726 social grant beneficiaries who withdrew their social grants outside the borders of South Africa during the lockdown period. The grants were all suspended in September, as the legislation requires any grant beneficiary to be a resident in South Africa. The fact that cross border travel was not permitted indicates that in all likelihood, these social grant beneficiaries are resident in our neighbouring countries.

It should further be noted that all social grants are means tested. This requires the applicant for any social grant to declare his/her income on application. In addition, each and every beneficiary of a social grant carries the responsibility to report any change in his/her financial circumstances to SASSA immediately there is a change. It could happen that a citizen applies for a grant when he/she is not employed, and subsequent to approval of the grant becomes employed. SASSA will not know about

this unless the beneficiary reports the matter; it is to deal with these situations that SASSA has to regularly review social grants.

Memela further added that through the implementation of the special relief grant of R350 per month, SASSA has been able to access databases from other government departments to validate the income of applicants for the grant. “The relationships developed during this pandemic will greatly assist SASSA in strengthening its validation processes, even for the long term social grants in the future. This will enable checks to be done to ensure that the financial information provided is complete and that grants are indeed provided to those who qualify for the grants”, she reiterated.

Furthermore, every citizen in this country has a responsibility to report wrong doing wherever this may be seen. This responsibility extends to the reporting of grants being received by citizens who do not qualify for them. Unfortunately, it appears that it is acceptable for citizens to take from government with impunity, as it is government money and there is plenty more where that comes from, rather than to understand that the money being used is taxpayers’ money, and everyone who receives what they is not entitled to, is in fact taking away from someone who depends on that money.

SASSA will continue to call on citizens to report the misuse and incorrect payment of social grants. In addition, we will continue with the implementation of our fraud prevention strategy, and strengthening collaborative efforts with any organisation that can support us in our endeavour to ensure that the social grants system, which has been internationally acknowledged, continues to support the most vulnerable members of our society.

Issued on behalf of the South African Social Security Agency

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