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**MEDIA STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SIU RECOVERS R 71.4 MILLION LINKED TO TERS CLAIMS

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has signed acknowledgments of debt (AOD) of approximately R 99.7 million with companies to pay back money received from the Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme (TERS).

The companies unduly claimed TERS funding from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF), an agency of the Department of Labour. Government setup TERS as part of an intervention to rescue industries that were negatively affected by Covid-19.

To date, the SIU has recovered cash to the value of approximately R 71.4 million since it commenced with investigations in June 2021. The figure includes R 9 987 728.71 that was paid directly to the UIF by companies. Some of the companies that paid money directly to UIF includes South African Airways Technical, which paid back R 8 830 044.19, and RH Matjhabeng Hospital, a private hospital in Free State province, among others. The hospital paid back R 488 458, 21.

The SIU investigation revealed that the hospital was not supposed to have applied and received TERS funds as their operations were not affected by Covid-19. The hospital management confirmed that it unduly received the funds and agreed to pay back the money to the SIU. Immediately after an agreement was reached, the hospital deviated from the agreement held with the SIU and paid back the money directly into the UIF account instead of the SIU.

In line with the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act, the SIU refers evidence pointing to criminal conduct to the Nation Prosecuting Authority for further action. On 27 February 2023, the East London Magistrate Court sentenced Zimbabwean citizen, Admirer Sibanda to one-year imprisonment and ordered that after serving the prison sentence that he be deported by the Home

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Affairs department to his country of origin. Sibanda pleaded guilty to the identity theft charge, which was used to commit TERS fraud.

The SIU was authorised by President Cyril Ramaphosa to investigate allegations made in respect of the affairs of the UIF in terms of Proclamation R.8 of 2021. The SIU investigated TERS payments to persons who were not entitled to receive such payments; submitted false, irregular, invalid or defective applications to the UIF, including the causes of such maladministration.

END.

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SIU SA

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