



MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

04 JULY 2023

SIU AND NPA RECOVER R1.9 MILLION FRAUDULENTLY CLAIMED FROM AGRISETA

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) welcome a payment of R1.9 million made by Bloemfontein pastor Lerato Raphael Mokoteli to Agriculture Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSeta).

The money was fraudulently claimed from AgriSeta, and constituted proceeds of unlawful activities committed between 2016 and 2019. Mokoteli made the payment of R1.9 million on 15 June to AgriSeta as part of guilty plea agreement with the State.

In March 2015, Mokoteli and Anthony Dywili fraudulently applied to AgriSeta for R1.9 million funding to provide training and mentoring in food garden operation in Kimberley. Mokoteli and Dywili claimed that the application was a joint venture between Business Against Crime and Dipalemo Training Strategic Services, an AgriSeta accredited service provider. However, such a joint venture did not exist. Dipalemo was not aware of the application and did not receive a cent.

In 2018, the SIU was authorised to investigate allegations of corruption and maladministration in the affairs of AgriSeta under Proclamation R 4 of 2018, and

recover any financial losses suffered by the State. The SIU investigation revealed the following:

- Upon receiving the R1.9 million funding, Mokoteli and Dywili concluded a Memorandum of Understanding between Business Against Crime and Northern Cape Empowerment Academy led by Dipalemo, knowing very well that the academy exists only on paper.
- Between June and November 2016, Mokoteli submitted invoices totalling R1.3 million to Business Against Crime on behalf of Dipalemo. Mokoteli did not have any relationship with Dipalemo.
- Mokoteli submitted to AgriSeta a close-up report on behalf of Dipalemo knowing very well that Dipalemo did not render any training.
- 50 learners were trained and received certificate of competency in food operation. They were paid a stipend of R219 000.
- R381 564.86 was claimed to have been used for the administration of training.
- Dywili did not disclose to AgriSeta that R600 000 of the funding was unspent, in violation of the terms of the agreement.
- In July 2016, R317 000 of the funding was paid to a non-profit organisation called Christian for Peace in Africa, which is chaired by Dywili. The bank account of the organisation was opened in June 2016.

In line with the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act 74 of 1996, the SIU referred evidence pointing to the commission of a criminal offense to the NPA in 2019 for further action.

The duo together with Jeremia Sello Madiba, AgriSeta chief executive officer between 2008 and 2017, were charged with various counts of fraud and money laundering. Madiba allegedly awarded the tender without the required decision by the Board of Directors of AgriSeta, therefore, in contravention of the Public

Finance Management Act (PFMA). He will be appearing in court on a PFMA charge on 28 August 2023.

On 26 May 2023, Mokoteli entered into a guilty plea agreement with the State. In terms of the agreement, Mokoteli pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud and two counts of money laundering and agreed to pay back R1.9 million to AgriSeta.

On 14 June, Mokoteli was given a 10-year sentence for two counts of fraud and five years for two counts money laundering. The sentence was suspended for a period of five years on condition that he is not convicted of similar offences during the period.

ENDS.

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