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**MEDIA STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**PRETORIA DOCTOR FAILS TO BLOCK SIU INVESTIGATION RELATING TO R20 MILLION
CIRCUMCISION FUNDING FROM NLC**

The High Court of South Africa: Gauteng Division, Pretoria, has dismissed, with costs, an application brought by Dr John Marite to appeal an earlier judgment, which dismissed his bid to interdict an investigation by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) in the affairs of the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) involving approximately R20.2 million grant funding.

In a judgment dated 13 February 2024, Acting Judge Hein Snyman said that the appeal against the September 2023 judgment by Dr Marite had no grounds for "prospects of success on appeal".

In the application brought before the High Court, Dr Marite sought to interdict the SIU investigation and compel the Unit to change its NLC investigation team and interfere in the way the Unit conducts its investigations.

An SIU investigation into the affairs of NLC revealed that Dr Marite's company, Right Play Health Services received approximately R7.2 million from Zibsimode NPC, a non-profit organisation with links to former NLC board chairperson Alfred Nevhutanda.

Zibsimode received grant funding of approximately R20.2 million from NLC for the roll-out of a public campaign and culturally sensitive medical intervention projects aimed at achieving traditional circumcision practice. The non-profit organisation contracted Dr Marite, a medical doctor based in Pretoria, and his Right Play Health Services to perform the male circumcision service.

On 31 May 2017, Dr. Marite invoiced Zibsimode and a payment of R7 292 700 was made into the bank account of Right Play Health Services. Two days later, Right Play Health Services deposited

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approximately R 2 009 700 to an entity called Ironbridge Travel Agency, owned by relatives of former NLC COO Philemon Letwaba, without a sign of any work being done.

Right Play Health Services further transferred R 2 013 000.00 Ndzhuku Trading entity owned by Malwandla Solly Siweya. Siweya's Ndzhuku Trading also received three payments from Zibsimode totalling R4.1 million.

The SIU interviewed Dr. Marite on the payment he received from Zibsimode and payments he made to Ironbridge Travel Agency and Ndzhuku Trading. When he failed to answer questions from SIU investigators, he approached the High Court to seek an order for SIU to change its NLC investigation team and interfere in the way the Unit conducts its investigations.

The SIU welcomes the High Court's ruling. The ruling paves the way for the Unit to finalise its investigation relating to the R7.2 million received by Dr Marite and ensures the independence of the SIU is not compromised.

The SIU was, in terms of Proclamation R32 of 2020, authorised by President Cyril Ramaphosa to investigate allegations of corruption and maladministration in the affairs of NLC and the conduct of NLC officials, and to recover any financial losses suffered by the State.

The SIU is empowered to institute civil action in the High Court or a Special Tribunal in its name, to correct any wrongdoing uncovered during its investigations caused by acts of corruption, fraud, or maladministration. In line with the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act 74 of 1996, the SIU refers any evidence pointing to criminal conduct to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for further action.

END.

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