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## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**19 March 2024**

## **OPTIMUM COAL MINE PAYS BACK OVER R6.9 MILLION IN UNPAID MOTOR LICENSING FEES AND PENALTIES**

Optimum Coal Mine has settled its outstanding motor licensing fees and penalties for the period between January 2018 and November 2022 with a payment of over R6.9 million. The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) recovered the funds as part of an investigation into the affairs of the Department of Transport.

The payment is a result of the Optimum signing an Acknowledgement of Debt (AoD) with the SIU to pay back R R6,914,303.52 in instalments, in unpaid motor licensing fees and penalties. The non-payment of motor licensing fees is a contravention of Regulation 18 of the National Road Traffic Act of 1996.

The AoD agreement emanated from the SIU's investigation under Proclamation R.37 of 2017, which authorised the SIU to investigate allegations of corruption and maladministration in the affairs of the National and Provincial departments of transport. The SIU's investigation focused on any conduct by officials or agents of the Department or any other person which relates to the registration of motor vehicle ownership and licensing details and non-payments of motor vehicle licensing fees, arrears, and penalties.

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The SIU analysed the information obtained from the Department of Transport and Road Traffic Management Centre as well as the eNatis data. After sifting through the eNatis data, the SIU established that the Department is owed the sum of R 6 914 304.52 in respect of the trucks and smaller vehicles owned by Optimum.

The SIU then wrote a letter of demand to Optimum to pay the licensing fees, arrears, and accumulated penalties on those vehicles. The recovery of these funds does not exempt other legal processes from being actioned.

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 refer any evidence pointing to criminal conduct to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for further action.

**END.**

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