



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**28 AUGUST 2025**

## **SIU WELCOMES THE SENTENCING OF THE FREE STATE WOMAN FOR COVID-19 TERS GHOST WORKERS FRAUD**

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) welcomes the sentencing of Ms. Ntsebeng Marygold Moji and her company, Aqua Land and Swimming Services, by the Phuthaditjhaba Magistrate's Court. The court found Ms. Moji guilty of fraud and money laundering related to the COVID-19 Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme (TERS).

Moji was sentenced to a fine of R178,128.36 for theft, alternatively four years' imprisonment. For money laundering, she received a five-year prison sentence, wholly suspended for five years. Her company, Aqua Land and Swimming Services, was fined R200,000 for theft and a further R200,000 for money laundering, with both fines wholly suspended for five years, provided the company does not commit the same offences during that period.

This sentencing follows the SIU's investigation, which uncovered that in 2020, Ms. Moji's company lodged fraudulent TERS applications with the UIF on behalf of 16 individuals who were not employees. The UIF subsequently paid R178,128.36 into Aqua Land's business account. In line with the SIU Act, evidence pointing to criminal conduct must be referred to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for action.

The evidence, which was referred to the NPA and formed the basis for the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation's arrest in February 2025, proved that these individuals were "ghost employees." Upon interviewing one of these individuals, the SIU confirmed that the person had never been employed by Aqua Land and had never received any payments from the company. Furthermore, a

forensic analysis of Aqua Land's bank statements showed no evidence that the TERS funds received from the UIF were ever used to pay salaries to any employees.

The sentencing of Moji and her company is part of implementing the outcomes of the SIU investigation and ensuring consequence management.

President Cyril Ramaphosa authorised the SIU to investigate allegations made in respect of the affairs of the Unemployment 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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