

# Media Statement



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**TO: ALL MEDIA**

**DATE: 21 AUGUST 2019**

**RE: MEMBER OF A CRIME SYNDICATE SENTENCED**

The Bellville Specialised Commercial Crimes Court has sentenced a member of a national crime syndicate that has defrauded the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) for millions of rands over a period of two years. The court sentenced Elliot Jingilisa to 15 years direct imprisonment after convicting him on 183 counts of fraud.

The court suspended seven years of his sentence for five years on condition that he is not convicted of fraud, attempted fraud, theft and corruption during the period of suspension. Before this sentencing, the accused was already serving five years direct imprisonment for theft in another unrelated matter.

Jingilisa was employed by SASSA as a Cash Payments Services (Pty) Ltd ("CPS") operator responsible for issuing SASSA cards for beneficiaries of the old age grant. He was also required to enrol beneficiaries on the system and capture their information after SASSA approved their grant application. In a plea and sentencing agreement he entered into with the state, he confessed that around November 2014, he received a call from a man called Zulu. Zulu told him that he is sending people to collect SASSA cards at the CPS offices in Philippi where he was working.

Although there were discrepancies around Identity Document numbers and photos against those in the system, he issued 183 fraudulent SASSA cards. He received R500 for each card he issued and benefitted a total amount of R91 500. SASSA lost R1, 3m through this fraudulent scheme.

The accused was part of a large syndicate that targeted a SASSA office in Matlosana in the North West where an unusually high number of new old age grant applications was enrolled. The district manager of that office decided to investigate and found that 362 applications were made. Only 33 of these could be located. There were no beneficiary

files for the 329 bogus beneficiaries and large amounts were paid into their accounts. Withdrawals from these accounts were made in the Free State (2), Gauteng (67), KwaZulu - Natal (606), Northern Cape (1), North West (28) and Western Cape (116).

In mitigation of sentence, the 32 year-old father of three minor children told the court that he was heavily in debt and in desperate need of money. He told the court that he was remorseful; he wanted to take responsibility and that he wanted to be rehabilitated.

Advocate Simon Leope who finalised the plea and sentencing agreement responded: "The accused's actions were perpetuated by greed and the love of money. White-collar crime such as corruption by government employees in positions of trust conspiring with members of the public conspiring have reached alarming proportions.

The NPA hopes this sentence sends a clear message that the organisation is committed to dealing with corruption by state officials and that those involved in corruption, which affects the poorest who depend on the state for their livelihood, will be dealt with harshly.

Kind Regards,

**Eric Ntabazalila**

**Regional Spokesperson: DPP Western Cape**

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