

Closure and Investigation the Masters' Offices

03 February 2020

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The purpose of this press conference is to inform our citizens that we are shutting down the Masters' Office today. The President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, has authorized the Special Investigation Unit to investigate allegations of maladministration, corruption and fraud in the office of the Master of the High Court country wide.

Following this proclamation, the Special Investigating Unit conducted a search and seizure operation today in the Masters' Offices across the country.

This investigation was necessitated by several allegations of maladministration and corruption and the Mpumalanga case wherein it is alleged that an official in the master's amassed 1.7 Million through fraudulent activities which further highlighted the need for an investigation of this nature.

As a result, we will be shutting down all Masters' Offices across the country to enable the SIU to gather, collate and retrieve information relevant to the investigation without any hinderance. **ALL OFFICES OF THE MASTERS WILL BE CLOSED ON 4TH FEBURARY AND WILL REOPEN ON WEDNESDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2020.**

We are fully aware that the Master's Office plays a critical role in our communities, it is an office that works for the most vulnerable in our communities, it works for orphans, minor children, and the widowed. We do however request members of the public to postpone their intention to visit the master's office just for a day. Matters which are urgent and pressing can be escalated to the Head office via the local Magistrates Office for the necessary attention.

The investigation will encompass maladministration in relation to administration of estates of deceased and insolvent persons; the protection and administration of the funds of minors, contractually incapacitated and undetermined and absent heirs, which have been paid into the Guardian's Fund; the supervision of the administration of companies and close corporations in liquidation; the safeguarding of all documentary material in respect of estates, insolvencies and liquidations; the processing of enquiries by executors, attorneys, beneficiaries and other interested parties; and the appointment of executors, trustees, curators and liquidators.

We want a Masters' Office that will conduct its affairs with integrity in line with Batho Pele Principles and not squander resources meant for the poor and vulnerable in society.

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