**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1608**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 29 APRIL 2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 15 - 2022**

**1608. Dr M M Gondwe (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) With reference to the finding of the Office of the Auditor-General that at least 5 812 public servants fraudulently applied for and received the R350 Social Relief of Distress Grant, what (a) informed the decision to investigate only 242 of the implicated public servants, (b) is the current status of the specified investigations and (c) date will the investigations be concluded;

(2) Whether her department is providing updates to Department of Public Service and Administration on the progress of the investigations and their outcomes; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1934E

**REPLY:**

1 (a) A multi stakeholder forum comprising of the South African Police Service **(SAPS),** National Prosecution Authority **(NPA),** Financial Intelligence Centre **(FIC)** and the Department of Public Service and Administration **(DPSA)** Discipline Management Unit is meeting under the auspices of the Fusion Centre with the intention of investigating the **5812** cases involving public servants who benefited from Covid -19 Social Relief of Distress grant. A directive was issued at Fusion Centre that a sample of **242** civil servants be dealt with in order to learn from it through identification of challenges and their resolution.

1(b) The investigation of the **242** sample found the following:

* Investigation revealed that **44** civil servants qualified to receive SRD grant as they were employed on sessional basis resulting in **198** civil servants to be taken for disciplinary and criminal action.
* Of the **198** civil servants, **DPSA** advised that **44** were no longer in the employ of government resulting in **154** disciplinary files being handed over to DPSA for the coordination and monitoring of the disciplinary hearings with Departments at Provincial and National level.
* Internal investigations involving 198 civil servants were concluded and opening of individual cases is in progress. The processes of opening of 198 cases is scheduled to be concluded by the 10th May 2022.
* For the purposes of loss recovery from government employees who refuse to sign acknowledgement of debt forms, Section 300 of the Criminal Procedure Act, will be invoked.

1(c) regarding the 5812 civil servants - SASSA intends to finalise the following two processes on or before the **31st September 2022:**

* Handing over files to DPSA for the purpose of disciplinary hearing coordination with affected National and Provincial Departments, and
* Opening criminal cases within various Provinces.

(2) There is an ongoing working partnership between SASSA and DPSA which has culminated in:

* the identification of the **242** civil servants, **44** civil servants qualified as they were sessional employees, resulting to **198** civil servants being under investigation.
* of the **198** civil servants it was further established that **44** civil servant were no longer in the employ of government resulting in **154** civil servants disciplinary files being handed over to DPSA for the coordination and monitoring of the disciplinary hearing processes with Departments at Provincial and National level.

On 21st April 2022 SASSA was invited by the DPSA to attend an event wherein **154** files were handed over to National and Provincial Departments for the commencement of the disciplinary hearing processes.