

**MINISTRY: PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**DATE: 12 MARCH 2021**

**QUESTION NO.: 825.**

**Dr M M Gondwe (DA) to ask the Minister of Public Service and Administration:**

(1) Whether, with reference to the findings by the auditor-general that some government employees applied for the Social Relief of Distress grant (SRD), his department took any disciplinary and/or legal steps against the implicated government employees; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2) Whether any steps have been taken to recover the monies from the implicated government employees; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) Whether any measures have been put in place to ensure that no government employee will be able to fraudulently and/or unlawfully apply for and/or receive the SRD grant; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW984E**

**REPLY:**

1. No employees of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) has been implicated, therefore the Department did not take any disciplinary and/or legal steps. Discipline management is a decentralised function and therefore the responsibility of each department to enforce the disciplinary code and take the necessary legal steps to recover public funds. The DPSA is only mandated to take action against its own employees when found guilty of wrongdoing through a disciplinary process.
2. The DPSA did not recover monies from the implicated public service employees. Before monies can be recovered from employees, an investigation must be finalised with sufficient evidence of criminality collected and recommending for monies to be recovered. The recovery of monies will then be effected through a court order. The mandate to investigate fraud, corruption and crime belongs solely to the South African Police Service, or under special circumstances to the Special Investigative Unit (SIU). The DPSA, including the Public Administration Ethics, Integrity and Disciplinary Technical Assistance Unit (PAEIDTAU), does not have a mandate to investigate crime or to recover monies from employees.
3. The DPSA established that all cases regarding government employees receiving Social Relief of Distress grants (SRD) were referred to the Fusion Centre, with a process embarked upon to analyse the data and to refer established cases to investigators. The Fusion Centre is an Anti-Corruption Task Team initiative, where resources of law enforcement agencies are pooled and coordinated to investigate and prosecute priority corruption cases. The DPSA has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Financial Intelligence Centre (who are involved in the Fusion Centre) in terms of which the DPSA will assist any investigations by identifying Public Service employees in corruption cases. In this regard, the DPSA will assist with the identification of Public Service employees from the SRD Grant cases, and after investigations established criminal conduct involving public service employees, the PAEIDTAU will monitor if national and provincial departments are taking disciplinary steps against the identified employees. The Department of Social Development will have to implement measures on their systems to prevent government employees to be able to fraudulently and/or unlawfully apply for and/or receive the SRD grants, as those systems are not managed or maintained by the DPSA.

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