Official reply: 20 May 2016

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 855/2016**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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**855. Ms N P Sonti (EFF) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) How many cases of unauthorised, illegal and falsified deductions of old age pensions in each province have been reported to her department since 2013;

(2) how many of the reported cases (a) have been finalised and (b) are still being investigated since 2013;

(3) how many (a) of the reported cases that were investigated involved SA Social Security Agency (SASSA) officials and (b) SASSA employees have been arrested in this regard since 1 January 2013? NW975E

**Reply:**

(1) It is difficult to isolate the number of unauthorized, illegal and falsified deductions which have been effected, as not all deductions are unauthorized and illegal. There are many deductions taking place which have been authorized by the beneficiaries. However, since 2014, when SASSA started recording and tracking the disputes, a total of 21 466 disputes have been recorded. In addition, during January 2016, syndicate fraud affecting approximately 8 000 social grant beneficiary accounts was uncovered originating in the Western Cape. For all these cases, the beneficiaries have been refunded the amounts deducted and a criminal investigation is underway.

(2) Of these 21 466, a total of (a) 12 160 have been resolved and (b) 9 094 are still under investigation.

(3) (a) None of the cases under investigation involve SASSA officials. Deductions occur once the social grant money has been paid into the bank account, and generally involve the beneficiary responding to SMS (mobile) marketing or taking a loan from a micro-lender.

(b) Since the practice does not involve SASSA officials, no SASSA official has been arrested in this regard.