

Special Investigating Unit grants order to interdict pension benefits of former NLC official

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The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) has obtained an order from the Special Tribunal to interdict pension payout due to former National Lotteries Commission's (NLC) Grant Manager, Marubini Ramatsekisa. Ramatsekisa allegedly orchestrated a scheme that resulted in the NLC losing approximately R4 million.

The Special Tribunal order -dated 12 December 2023- interdicts Ramatsekisa from withdrawing his pension benefits of approximately R1.7 million. The pension funds will remain interdicted pending a finalisation of an application to be brought against him by the SIU.

He resigned from the NLC after the lottery commission instituted disciplinary proceedings against him to avoid accountability. Immediately after he resigned, Ramatsekisa wrote to his pension fund administrator that he intends to withdraw his pension benefits prompting the SIU to seek an interdict.

The SIU's investigation in the affairs of NLC found that Ramatsekisa was a key player and a willing facilitator of an elaborate scheme to defraud the commission through pro-active funding. The SIU has uncovered evidence that links Ramatsekisa to losses suffered by the NLC in the amount of approximately R4 million. The SIU intends to institute civil proceedings against Mr Ramatsekisa to recover damages suffered by NLC because of his conduct.

The SIU's investigation revealed that on 20 February 2019, Ramatsekisa prepared a proposal for pro-active funding and recommended that the acting chief operating officer approve pro-active funding of approximately R 4 million to conduct a study that will assist in developing Khoi-San language. Three weeks later, three people acquired and became directors of a dormant shelf company named Zibsicraft NPC. From the documents in the SIU's possession, Zibsicraft NPC then applied to the NLC for grant funding. The application is not stamped, which means it was never processed by the client liaison officer. The application was dated 25 March 2019, ten days after they had acquired the company.

The application was accompanied by financial statements prepared for the periods ending 28 February 2018 and 28 February 2019. However, the NPO only opened a bank account on 19 March 2019, six days before it applied for funding.

The SIU found that from the R4 million, R2.2 million allegedly went towards purchasing property for a church named the Higher Grace Christ Redeemer Church. In the offer to purchase the church was being represented by the former NLC Board Chairperson, Alfred Nevhutanda and his wife, Mrs Tshilidzi Rachel Nevhutanda.

The SIU was, in terms of Proclamation R32 of 2020, authorised by President Cyril Ramaphosa to investigate allegations of corruption and maladministration in the affairs of NLC and the conduct of NLC officials and to recover any financial losses suffered by the State.

The order of the Special Tribunal is part of the implementation of SIU investigation outcomes and consequence management to recover financial losses suffered by State institutions because of corruption or negligence.

The SIU is empowered to institute civil action in the High Court or a Special Tribunal in its name to correct any wrongdoing uncovered during investigations, caused by acts of corruption, fraud, or maladministration. In line with the Special Investigating Units and Special Tribunals Act 74 of 1996, the SIU refers any evidence pointing to criminal conduct it uncovers to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for further action.

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