

The Hands Off our Grants (HOOG) Campaign

Black Sash Media Release

5 October 2016

Prayer Service to stop unauthorized, fraudulent and unlawful debit deductions permanently!

The Black Sash, its civil society partners and grant beneficiaries will be hosting a prayer service at **St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town on Wednesday 12 October 2016 at 14h00** which will be followed by a Silent Stand on the steps until 15h30. We will pray for justice for thousands of beneficiaries plagued by unauthorized, unlawful and fraudulent debit deductions from their SASSA bank account. We are also praying for guidance and wisdom in the four court cases to be heard on the 17th and 18th October 2016 in the High Court in Pretoria.

In response to pressure from civil society, the Department of Social Development published new regulations to the Social Assistance Act in May 2016, to stop the flood of unauthorised, unlawful and fraudulent deductions from the SASSA bank accounts and protect social grants from exploitation. Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) and Grindrod Bank were instructed to remove the debit order facility and stop all deductions from the SASSA bank accounts.

However, in June 2016 Net1 (parent company of CPS), some of its subsidiaries (Moneyline, Manje Mobile and Smartlife) as well as a few other companies initiated four legal cases against SASSA and the Department of Social Development. These companies question government's interpretation of the new regulations, particularly the protected ring fenced bank account. They furthermore ask the court to declare the new regulations unconstitutional.

Black Sash and six co- applicants have asked the High Court for the right to intervene in the four cases against SASSA and the Department of Social Development. It is asking the court to order that the Minister publish regulations to protect social grants from exploitation if: (a) DSD and SASSA's interpretation is correct; and (b) that if the interpretation renders the new regulations unconstitutional - government should be given the opportunity to fix the new regulations, and if defective, to protect vulnerable beneficiaries from predatory and unscrupulous financial and other third party service providers.

The Black Sash and partners have supported many beneficiaries to secure recourse and refunds for deductions from the bank accounts into which their social grants are paid. We salute Mr Bani, Mrs Hendricks, Mrs Saptoe, Mrs Nkosi, Mrs Nthite and Mrs Bezuidenhout for their brave stand as co-applicants in the upcoming court cases. Join us as we support in prayer, our co-applicants,

Trustees: Sibongile (Bongi) Mkhabela (Chairperson), Yasmin Turton (Deputy Chairperson), Woineshet Bischoff, Maria (Mary) Burton, Jennifer De Tolly, Margaret (Dolly) Khumalo, Mary Kleinenberg, Thembi (Nyami) Mbhele, Mary-Jane Morifi, Diana (Di) Oliver, Yasmin Sooka, Hilary Southall

the Black Sash and countless other social grant beneficiaries who are seeking justice.

Please note:

Please make alternative parking arrangements as the Cathedral's parking is pre-booked.

Please observe the St. George's Cathedral photography policy - no flash photography of any kind is allowed during religious ceremonies and services.

The photographer should not be in full view of the congregation and should not move between the congregations or across the front of the Nave.

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