



## **EFF STATEMENT ON THE SIU INVESTIGATION INTO MEDICO-LEGAL CLAIMS**

Tuesday, 27th August 2024

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is appalled, though unsurprised, by the extensive corruption, fraud, and maladministration in the medico-legal claims within South Africa's public healthcare sector, as uncovered by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU). The ANC Government is responsible for allowing such rot and the perpetual collusion across every layer of the medical system—from unscrupulous attorneys, doctors and nurses.

The SIU's investigation has unearthed a litany of extreme acts of fraud that paint a damning picture of the extent of this medical mafia. The fraudulent schemes perpetrated by greedy lawyers, often in collusion with healthcare professionals, have robbed children and families of the compensation they deserved. These payouts, meant to alleviate the suffering caused by medical negligence, have instead lined the pockets of opportunistic criminals, leaving those in need destitute.

In some instances, attorneys colluded with doctors and nurses to fabricate medical records. Nurses were found stealing medical records and handing them over to lawyers, who would then submit claims on behalf of patients who either did not exist or had no knowledge of any legal action being taken in their name.

One of the most heinous aspects of this scam involved lawyers who targeted families of children suffering from cerebral palsy—a condition caused by brain damage during birth. These legal vultures exploited the tragic circumstances of these families, filing claims against the Department for negligence with inflated or entirely fabricated damages. They knew that with the stolen or manipulated medical records, the Department of Health would be unable to mount a defence, leading to massive payouts that never reached the intended beneficiaries.

In the Eastern Cape alone, a single law firm was responsible for submitting 44 suspected fraudulent medico-legal claims, totalling nearly R500 million. The extent of this corruption is staggering, with the SIU referring 45 cases involving attorneys to the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) for potential criminal charges, including fraud, theft, and embezzlement of trust funds.

Some of these legal practitioners went as far as posing as social workers, preying on elderly caregivers and tricking them into signing power of attorney documents under the false pretence of applying for child support grants. These vulnerable citizens, who believed they were securing a better future for their grandchildren, were instead ensnared in a web of deceit, losing whatever meagre compensation they were owed.

The fact that the ANC government is even offering a two-week amnesty to these criminals to withdraw their fraudulent claims is a disgrace. How do you negotiate with thieves who have already betrayed the trust of the people? These corrupt legal practitioners and medical personnel must be prosecuted without delay—anything less is a betrayal of justice. We vehemently oppose any amnesty.

The EFF supports an increase in budget allocation to the SIU so as to ensure maximum capacity for a speedy prosecution. A country riddled with corruption both in government and private sector must have its investigation and prosecution entities optimally functional as corruption thrives when such entities are under resourced.

The EFF will attend the court proceedings in this matter to provide oversight. We will also diligently pursue the matter in Parliament.

**ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS**

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