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PROBE

Social grant fraud tops the list of complaints

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THE National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH) system was inundated with calls of alleged fraud incidents in relation to the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa).

Once again social grant fraud topped complaints that were most commonly reported on NACH, with 315 calls referred for investigation.

According to the Public Service Commission (PSC) it had recorded a total of 495 complaints during the second quarter of 2022/23 financial year.

"The majority of cases were referred to Sassa for investigation. The rest of the cases were referred to national and provincial departments for investigation. Service delivery-related complaints account for 14 of the matters reported via the Nach. Unethical behaviour accounted for 13 of the complaints reported through the system. Identity document fraud and illegal immigration account for 12 of the matters reported. Appointment and procurement irregularities, nepotism, fraud and bribery and maladministration account for 19," said commissioner Anele Gxoyiya.

He released the Pulse of the Public Service covering the period July 1 to September 30, 2023, yesterday.

It comes ahead of International Anti-Corruption Day on Friday under the theme: "Uniting against corruption: how to better collaborate and improve implementation and impact".

"While corruption in the public sector is by no means a new phenomenon, the nature and extent of corruption, manifesting primarily through unlawful procurement contracts, was not fully comprehended until now. Corruption is largely due to the public officials who are serving their personal,

factional and private interests, rather than the interests of the citizens or the Constitution," said Gxoyiya.

He said 302 grievances were filed in relation to unfair treatment, filling of posts, performance assessments and salary problems among public servants. PSC noted 95% of the grievances were referred claiming it was an indication that departments have failed to resolve grievances internally within the prescribed time frames.

"Unfair treatment cases mostly emanate from strained relations between supervisors and supervisees, resulting in supervisees perceiving any action by supervisors, such as questioning the employees' failure to meet deadlines or quality of work, as victimisation or bullying. Other cases of unfairness emanate from employees not understanding that they may be assigned to do certain ad hoc functions or not being happy about not being appointed into positions in which they were acting," said Gxoyiya.

He also flagged that a trend was noted where the Health Department was always topping the list of non-compliance as it had 690 unpaid invoices worth R40 million.

Water and Sanitation reported unpaid invoices worth R2.7m and Public Works and Infrastructure invoices worth R22m. The department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development had outstanding invoices worth R1.8m and for Tourism, invoices worth R20 094. "Out of 40 national departments, only 15 departments fully complied with policy on timeous payments. The most common reasons provided by both the national and provincial departments for the late or non-payment of invoices are interruptions caused by poor internal controls, internal capacity, and budget constraints," said Gxoyiya.