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Tel: +27 (0) 12 843 0001
SIU Hotline: 0800 037 774
Email: info@siu.org.za
www.siu.org.za



**MEDIA STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
21 FEBRUARY 2024**

SIU AND HAWKS RAID ACCOUNTING FIRM IN KIMBERLEY AS PART OF R1.4 BILLION NLC INVESTIGATION

The Special Investigating Unit (SIU) and the Directorate for Priority Crimes Investigation, commonly known as the Hawks, on Wednesday, 21 February 2024, raided an accounting firm in Kimberley, Northern Cape, in search of evidence to assist with the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) investigation.

The SIU was granted a search and seizure warrant by the Magistrate Court of the Republic of South Africa, District of Kimberley.

The raid follows a tip off received from a whistleblower suggesting that certain accounting firms and accountants were allegedly engaged in criminal activities by aiding nonprofit organisations (NPO) and nonprofit companies (NPC) in preparing and producing fraudulent financial statements which are meant to be submitted to the NLC in support of their application for grant funding.

One of the requirements for NLC grant funding in terms of the Lotteries Act is that an applicant must submit an audited financial statement together with a duly completed application form.

The whistleblower alleged that several NPOs and NPCs submitted fraudulent financial statements to the NLC, which were prepared, produced, and signed off by the directors and or representatives of the accountants without any bank statements submitted to the accountants.

The law enforcement agencies searched and seized laptops and relevant documents to assist with the SIU's investigation in the affairs of NLC, which is estimated to be approximately R1.4 billion.

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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.

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

END.

Enquiries:

Kaizer Kganyago

Spokesperson: Special Investigating Unit

082 306 8888

KKganyago@siu.org.za



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