



the sandf

Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE: 22 October 2013

EMBARGO: None

SUBJECT: “**SOLDIERS’ WIDOWS LEFT PENNILESS**”

The Sunday Times article headlined “**Soldiers’ widows left penniless**”, dated 20 October 2013, the Secretary of South African National Defence Union(SANDU) is being quoted as saying “pensions were meant to be paid out to families within two months, but this was not happening owing to the defence department’s poor administration”.

It is unfortunate that Mr Pikkie Greef chooses to mislead families of the deceased South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members who died in Central African Republic earlier this year. The families are still in the mourning process wherein they seek closure by dealing with the sad loss of their heroes who served the SANDF with zeal. They (families) do not need a reminder of such a sad and tragic loss of human lives neither should they be susceptible to the mendacious utterances made by Mr Greef. Mr Greef’s statement suggests that he is ignorant of the process which governs the administration and payment thereof of the pension to the beneficiaries followed by the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF).

The SANDF would like to put it on record that the process of payment of pension does not fall on the jurisdiction of the SANDF but that of Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF). The processes and procedures guiding the GEPF must be adhered to before payment of pension benefits are paid in order to avoid fraudulent payments. There is no specified period within which a claim is paid, owing to the reasons that are advanced herewith above.

The SANDF can confirm that the delay on payment of the individuals mentioned in the newspaper was due to the following reasons:

- ❖ Lance Corporal Daniel Sello Molora’s confirmation of banking details from the family could only be obtained on 30 September and therefore it was submitted for payment by the GEPF on 04 October 2013.
- ❖ In the case of Rifleman Karabo Edwin Matsheka, the GEPF is verifying the paternity of the dependant and requires a maintenance order or the results of a paternity test before any pension benefit payments are effected.

- ❖ Pertaining to Private Khomotso Paul Msenga, his family disputes the identified life partner's claim had approached the Master of the High Court to settle the matter.

The SANDF has recently established the South African National Defence Force Educational Trust for the families of the deceased SANDF members who perished during operational duties of the SANDF. This trust will provide bursaries and scholarships in order to bring stability to the families of the deceased SANDF members and encourages them to pursue their studies further.

The criterion for the beneficiaries will be as follows:

- SANDF members killed or severely injured, subsequent to 27 April 1994 whilst on official duties.
- Civilian members of the Department of Defence killed or severely injured subsequent to 27 April 1994 whilst deployed in operations with the SANDF.
- Citizens of the Republic of South Africa killed or injured subsequent to 27 April 1994 during the course of an operation of the SANDF, provided that such citizens were not engaged in an activity in opposition to the aims of the SANDF operations.

Ends.

Issued by: Defence Corporate Communication
(Defence Media Liaison)
Pretoria

Enquiries: Brigadier General Xolani Mabanga
083 410 1655