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CW celebrates multiple triumphs for democracy in South Africa

Today's judgment by the Constitutional Court regarding the payment of social grants by the South African Social Services Agency (Sassa) and Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) was a resounding win for South Africans and a celebration of the independence of the judiciary in the country.

Corruption Watch, in its role as *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) in the matter regarding Black Sash vs Minister of Social Development and others, will continue to participate in any further hearings or proceedings still to unfold.

David Lewis, executive director of Corruption Watch, commented: 'This has been a good day at the office. The Constitutional Court has not only crafted a solution to the immediate crisis confronting our social grants programme, but it has also signalled its determination to hold personally accountable those responsible for the social grants crisis.'

In a further development arising from the Sassa social grant debacle, the announcement today by Allan Gray, one of the largest shareholders in CPS holding company Net1, that it is considering taking action against the board of Net1 is also to be welcomed.

Another landmark judicial decision was handed down today in the North Gauteng High Court, setting aside the appointment of the head of the Hawks, Berning Ntlemenza. This provides a further victory for the preservation of our democracy when a person so manifestly unsuitable to hold such a high profile position in what is perhaps the premier anti-corruption law enforcement unit is deemed unfit to carry out the tasks of that office. This is especially true when considering the significant impact of the work of the Hawks on the lives of ordinary people.

'The High Court's decision to remove General Ntlemenza from his position at the Hawks also confirms the critical role of an independent judiciary,' said Lewis. 'However while the judiciary emerges with its well-deserved reputation for independence and courage enhanced, today's judicial decisions also serve to underline the incompetence and malfeasance of key elements of our executive branch, and of the failure of the legislative branch to hold the executive to account.'

Contact:

Patience Mkosana

Cell: 072 992 9380

E-mail: patience@corruptionwatch.org.za

Moirac Campbell

Cell: 083 995 4711

E-mail: moirac@corruptionwatch.org.za