

**PRESS RELEASE**

**28 February 2017**

**BLACK SASH TAKES SASSA TO COURT OVER GRANTS**

**The Black Sash Trust, represented by the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, launches Constitutional Court application against SASSA to protect social grants**

The Centre for Applied Legal Studies, on behalf of the Black Sash Trust, is today launching an application to the Constitutional Court. The application asks the Court to compel the Minister of Social Development and the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) to take necessary measures to ensure that the social grants system and its beneficiaries are protected when the contract between SASSA and Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) comes to an end on 31 March 2017.

It is the view of the Black Sash Trust that due to an urgency of SASSA's own making, SASSA has no choice but to negotiate a further uncompetitive contract with CPS. CPS is currently the only entity capable of distributing social grants to over 17 million South Africans. The Black Sash Trust therefore is asking the Court to ensure that:

- the continued relationship with CPS is based on terms not harmful to, or exploitative of, the grant system and its beneficiaries;
- the personal data of beneficiaries is owned by SASSA; and
- such data is kept confidential and not used for marketing purposes targeting grant beneficiaries.

CALS and the Black Sash Trust are deeply concerned that the payment of grants to over 17 million beneficiaries will be compromised due to the failure of SASSA to ensure that it was ready to take over payment of the grant system by 1 April 2017, or award a lawful competitive tender timeously. The result is that it appears SASSA has no choice but to enter into a further uncompetitive contract with CPS. The emergency situation created demonstrates that the Minister of Social Development does not have adequate oversight over SASSA. Black Sash is therefore also requesting that the Constitutional Court re-establish its oversight in respect of the process of social grant payments and provide milestones as well as timelines.

We can only hope to avoid more harm by ensuring that the contract going forward is not negotiated on terms only favourable to CPS and instead protects the constitutional rights of the people it is meant to benefit.

**For further enquiries, please contact:**

**The Black Sash Trust**

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