

UIF pays out millions to Northern Cape workers

The Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) has paid out almost half a billion rand to 43,333 workers in the Northern Cape province through the Covid-19 Temporary Employer-Employee Relief Scheme (Covid-19 Ters).



Image source: Leon Swart – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

UIF Commissioner Teboho Maruping revealed these figures during a media briefing at the Department of Employment and Labour's provincial office in Kimberley on Tuesday, 14 March 2023.

Maruping informed the media that a total of R488m was disbursed to workers in the Northern Cape Province, arising from 3,202 Covid-19 Ters applications that the UIF received from employers.

The top 10 employer sectors in the Northern Cape province that received the lion's share of the R488m for their workers are personal services; trade; mining; construction; hospitality; professional services; agriculture; educational services; and iron and steel.

Maruping also divulged that forensic auditors of the UIF have been auditing companies in the province to ensure that the

correct amounts of money were paid over to workers at the right time. Thus far, he said no fraud cases had been discovered.

“Our forensic auditors have been on the ground across the Northern Cape province as part of the ‘follow the money’ project and have thus far not detected any Covid-19 TERS fraud. This is quite pleasing and refreshing because for a change we see a positive story, one of the good corporate citizenry from employers.

“It also tells a story of caring employers because as we very well know, the Northern Cape is one of the poorest provinces in our country,” Maruping said.

The briefing heard that 10 employers were recently audited in the Northern Cape and it was found that all of them had paid the correct amounts of money to their workers at the right time.

Smiso Nkosi, from the UIF Commissioner’s Office, said consequences were in place for employers who refused to cooperate with the “follow the money” auditors. These entail:

- Referral to the Special Investigating Unit (SIU);
- Refund the whole Covid-19 TERS funds;
- Employers could be blocked from the UIF’s service offerings; and
- Employers may be blacklisted from doing business with UIF.



UIF audits companies that claimed Covid-19 TERS monies

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Commissioner Maruping also highlighted that the Fund was committed to improving service delivery, by amongst others, launching a free (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data USSD) and a Mobile Application (APP) soon for clients to access services from the comfort of their homes.

“The free USSD and mobile app will eradicate the long queues at our labour centres by allowing our clients to freely check their claims, lodge complaints, and submit a request for payments from anywhere,” the Commissioner explained.

He also indicated that the UIF was providing free Wi-Fi at labour centres and procuring fully equipped buses to take services to clients in the most remote parts of the province.

“We are mindful of the vast geographical spread in the province and the high levels of poverty, and for this reason, our responsibility to ensure that our services are accessible is to provide free Wi-Fi and busses that are equipped to take on and process claims efficiently, anywhere in the country,” he said.

Responding to questions about how the UIF could assist beneficiaries of workers who had passed away, such as the farmworkers who perished as a result of the recent heatwave in the Northern Cape, Maruping said the Fund has a death benefit which dependants of deceased workers can apply for.

Further to this, Maruping said they also have an illness benefit that workers can apply for while they recover at home in the event of illness.

In the 2023/2024 financial year ahead, the Fund will redouble its efforts of taking services to clients, especially those who reside in remote areas, Maruping said.

The UIF is an entity of the Department of Employment and Labour, mandated to provide short-term financial relief benefits

to qualifying and contributing workers and their beneficiaries.

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