



NEHAWU PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR THE IEJ AND #PAYTHEGRANTS PRETORIA HIGH COURT CASE

MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday October 29, 2024

The National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union [NEHAWU] pledges its full weight in support of the Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ) and #PayTheGrants Pretoria High Court Case.

As a transformational union espousing and championing many of the progressive and developmental principles contained in the South African Constitution, in particular Section 27 (1)(c), which aims to ensure that everyone has the right to have access to social security, including if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance, this court case is of great importance to NEHAWU and the millions of vulnerable South African's that rely on social grants as a life-line and security net.

Workers and the poor have been battered in recent years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our economy but, also as a result of failed Neoliberal economic policies, plunging millions into desperate and destitute living conditions. NEHAWU has been consistent in putting forward our perspective in the form of making submissions on the annual consideration by the state to increase the Social Relief of Distress [SRD] grant. Our position has always insisted that Government must proactively work towards expanding the SRD grant into a Universal Basic Income Grant/ Guarantee [UBIG]. This insistent demand has also been made by COSATU affiliates and other progressive organisations such as the IEJ and #PayTheGrants.

The High Court case is informed by the South African Social Service Agency [SASSA] and the Department of Social Development's failure to ensure that the SRD grant is not only increased in real terms [taking inflation into account] but is also procedurally accessible to our most vulnerable in society. Both the Department and SASSA have issued offensive statements directed at SRD beneficiaries, the restrictions they have put in place in applying for an SRD grant severely discriminate against potential and current beneficiaries, particularly in rural areas and those lacking access to the internet. Of even greater concern is the duplicitous attitude of Government as it relates to National Treasury's prescribed cap of 8.5 million beneficiaries per month to suit its fiscal consolidation trajectory [Neoliberal austerity measures].

As NEHAWU, we would like to not only pledge our support for this milestone litigious action but to also encourage COSATU affiliates, progressive organisations and individuals to rally behind this case and to mobilise our members in support of the demands put forward by IEJ and #PayTheGrants. Of important significance, and in giving greater gravitas to the strength of this case, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has also expressed interest in supporting the IEJ and #PayTheGrants in this struggle.

END

Issued by NEHAWU Secretariat.

www.nehawu.org.za
lwazin@nehawu.org.za

Zola Saphetha (General Secretary) 082 558 5968;
December Mavuso (Dep. Gen. Secretary) at 082 558 5969;
Lwazi Nkolonzi (National Spokesperson) at 081 558 2335