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Department:  
Justice and Constitutional Development  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

09 September 2021

### **THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'S IT SYSTEM ATTACKED BY RANSOMWARE**

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has established that its Information Technology systems have been interrupted due to a security breach. The breach was effected through ransomware on the evening of 6 September 2021.

Ransomware is often spread through phishing emails that contain malicious attachments or through drive-by downloading. Drive-by downloading occurs when a user unknowingly visits an infected website and then malware is downloaded and installed without the user's knowledge.

This has led to all information systems being encrypted and unavailable to both internal employees as well as members of the public.

As a result, all electronic services provided by the Department are affected, including, issuing of letters of authority, bail services, email, and the departmental website. The Department would want to assure all affected parties that our IT teams are working tirelessly to restore services as soon as is practically possible.

Child Maintenance payments for month-end have already been processed and will therefore not be impacted by the current system outage.

The Department has activated its Business Continuity Plan and put contingency measures in place to ensure that the IT system challenges do not affect court operations around the country. Manual recording equipment will be used to ensure that court seatings continue as scheduled.

The Office of the Chief Master is currently using a manual process to provide bereaved families with the necessary documentation that they need to bury their loved ones.

The Department's IT experts are working together with state agencies to investigate and resolve the problem. So far no indication of data compromise has been detected.

The Department apologises for any inconvenience this may cause to the public.

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**Issued by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development**