



## PRESS RELEASE

### Devoted Citizens Standing Against Corruption

#### **Petition Against “Covidpreneurs” and all corrupt public officials**

*Friday, 31 July 2020*

Recent reports on the escalation of corruption in South Africa’s public sector have come as an absolute shock and huge disappointment to many citizens in the country. Not only is the country trying to contain the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is also failing to come to terms with public officials who continue to betray the trust of its citizens.

Rev. Siphwe Mathebula, Lead Pastor of Hope Restoration Ministries (HRM), says the misuse of public funds and resources as well as the abuse of public office for personal gain has always been a problem in South Africa. According to Rev. Mathebula, the recent trend of government officials profiteering from a global crisis which has seen South Africa being listed in the Top Five countries in the world with the most COVID-19 cases, is beyond immoral.

“Not only has corruption compromised government’s ability to deliver services to its people in the past but it has also eroded the economy of the country. This has left the poor, poorer and the corrupt, richer because of ill gotten money. Corruption was a problem before, but the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the level of rot in our government. The emergence of the so called Covidpreneurs is just shameful,” he said.

Reports in the media have indicated that anti-corruption investigators are probing allegations of corrupt officials and unscrupulous business people who have benefited from an estimated total of R500 billion relief package part of which was meant to be used to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The dodgy dealings took advantage of the government’s Disaster Regulations to appoint service providers to supply Protective Personal Equipment for healthcare professionals working in the frontline in an irregular manner. This occurs against the backdrop of South Africa getting a loan of R70 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to salvage the trail of destruction that the pandemic is causing.

“It is inconceivable that during a time of such deep crisis in the entire world, there are people in this country who are in leadership positions who are still thinking of ways to benefit as individuals and rob their citizens. This is a time of reckoning. It calls for citizens that are devoted to this country to stand up and say something,” said Rev Mathebula.

He said under the banner of its Devoted Citizen campaign, HRM is launching a petition for South Africans to demand tougher measures to be taken against corrupt officials.

