

Online gamblers forfeit R1m winnings to State

Illegal gamblers have forfeited over R1 million of their winnings to the State, says Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies.



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Unprecedented court proceedings led to the gamblers' unlawful winnings of about R1.25 million being confiscated and forfeited to the State.

Trade and Industry Minister Dr Rob Davies said online gambling is illegal and that should South African citizens participate in online gambling and they win, their winnings are the proceeds of an illegal activity and they will therefore be confiscated and forfeited to the State.

The Minister had previously cautioned that online gambling is illegal.

National Gambling Board

The National Gambling Board (NGB), which is an agency of the Department of Trade and Industry (dti), is the national regulator in the gambling industry in South Africa.

In terms of Section 16 of the National Gambling Act, 2004, the NGB is obliged to investigate the circumstances of illegal gambling activities including illegal online gambling.

Upon determination of such illegal gambling activity, it applies to the high court for an order declaring that the unlawful winnings be forfeited to the state.

Meanwhile, Minister Davies has also expressed concern that online gambling could be used to launder money. It is on this basis that the banks continue to collaborate with the National Gambling Board to confiscate the unlawful winnings.

Accounting Authority of the National Gambling Board, Caroline Kongwa, emphasised that besides the forfeiture of unlawful winnings in favour of the State, the punters, who partake in illegal gambling activities, are liable for criminal prosecution.

“The public is hereby cautioned to be weary of online gambling offerings, as online gambling is illegal in South Africa, and thus anyone participating in any illegal online gambling activity would be unable to receive any winnings and would expose themselves to criminal prosecution,” she said.

She added that citizens caught gambling illegally or running an illegal gambling establishment like internet cafes that provide illegal online gambling will be targeted and they will face criminal charges or a fine to the maximum of R10 million or both.

“The NGB is encouraged by the judiciary system in considering gambling related matters and in a related matter, the High Court of South Africa, Gauteng Division, granted a court judgement in favour of a licenced gambling operator prohibiting an illegal gambling operator from offering illegal online gambling,” said Kongwa.

She emphasises that the NGB’s role and mandate is to protect the public. She also appealed to the public to report websites which advertise online gambling and establishments (especially those disguised as internet cafes) in South Africa which offer online gambling and other illegal gambling activities to the public.

The public was also encouraged to be vigilant and to distinguish between licensed and unlicensed gambling operators in addition to being aware of what constitutes an unlawful gambling activity.

The NGB can be contacted on +27 (0)10 003 3475 and for any further information at www.ngb.org.za. Information relating to any suspected illegal gambling activity in South Africa can be provided to the NGB at fraudalert@ngb.org.za.

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