

MUSHROOMING OF ILLEGAL GAMBLING SITES, A CAUSE FOR CONCERN IN THE PLATINUM BELT



The past few years has seen an unprecedented mushrooming of illegal gambling operations in the Bojanala District of the North West province. The Rustenburg and Brits areas being the primary targets of these unscrupulous acts. The North West Gambling Board recently embarked on campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of illegal gambling operations. Often these operations are a haven for criminal activities such as money laundering, human and drug trafficking as well as tax evasion.

The mushrooming of illegal operations in this region has reached a peak as these sites target desperate people who have pinned their hopes on gambling to escape their socio-economic woes. Since the 2014 mineworker's marathon strike, income-inequalities in this region have shot up as retrenchments have become the order of the day. For some gambling is seen as a means to supplement their meagre incomes. This is attributed by two former mine employees who spoke to the North West North West Gambling staff on condition of anonymity.

The North West Gambling Board CEO, Mr Fortune Sekgaphane has appealed to members of the community to report any illegal gambling activities or operations to the nearest police station. In an exclusive interview with one of the leading provincial radio stations ahead of the campaigns, the CEO warned against gambling operations that flout the law maintaining that the Board will act harshly against them.

“As the Board, we will do everything in our power to see to it that there is compliance in the gambling industry in North West. These illegal gambling operations are stealing from the country and its people through various means. They don’t pay tax and gambling levies. And I’m saying that this must stop” Sekgaphane said.

Mr Sekgaphane further maintained, the Board’s Investigations and Licensing department is working around the clock to close unscrupulous gambling operations.

“We have systems in place to deal with this quagmire and I can guarantee you that we are winning the war on illegal gambling operations. It’s not easy as these operations often take us to court to try and salvage their illegal activities. ”

Several illegal gambling operations in Rustenburg and Mooinooi were identified by the Board’s inspectors and in Mooinooi three (3) offence notices were issued in contravention of Section 82, Act 2 of 2001 of the North West Gambling Board. More campaigns of a similar type will be carried-out throughout the province in an attempt to educate people on responsible gambling and about the dangers of illegal gambling operations.