



## **Treasury-Imposed Conditions Threaten Social Grants**

09 June 2025

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The Universal Basic Income Coalition (UBIC) has urgently written to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Social Development, warning that National Treasury's new budget conditions for SASSA could plunge millions of South Africa's most vulnerable into deeper poverty and exclusion.

The conditions disclosed by SASSA and the Department of Social Development in a parliamentary presentation on 23 April 2025, require SASSA to apply intrusive and exclusionary verification systems across all major grants, including the Child Support Grant, Old Age Grant, Disability Grant and the Care Dependency Grant.

We have warned in a letter to the Committee that these measures will have devastating consequences for babies, children, caregivers (mostly women), older persons, and people with disabilities. They amount to a mass violation of constitutional rights and roll back access to essential social protections.

Our key concerns as the coalition include:

- Invasive monthly bank surveillance and use of undisclosed credit bureau data;
- Cross-checks with inaccurate government databases like UIF and NSFAS;
- Profiling for "fraud risk" and mandatory biometric verification;
- A proposed reduction in the Child Support Grant's means test threshold, despite 70% of children living in poverty.
- Mass suspension of beneficiaries without notice, with the onus being placed on them to disprove blanket allegations of fraud.

As UBIC, we have flagged that many of these methods - first used to administer the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant, have been found to be unconstitutional by the High Court and have already wrongly excluded millions from accessing their entitlements.

Since 2022, [90% of SRD grant exclusions have been erroneous](#). Now the Treasury is forcing SASSA to extend these flawed systems to all major social grants, putting up to 6 million children

and 3.5 million caregivers at risk, along with potentially millions of seniors and persons with disabilities.

The letter also highlights a transparency crisis. SASSA has stopped publishing SRD grant data, despite it being the third-largest item in the country's social assistance budget. In its media statement of 27 May 2025, SASSA revealed that 210,000 beneficiaries have been placed under "review", based on credit bureau data, with grants potentially recoverable as debt.

UBIC's submission comes as the DSD and Treasury prepare to finalise a long-awaited Basic Income Support (BIS) policy, which UBI believes has undergone substantial revisions since the last public consultations in March 2023. We are calling for this draft to be made public for consultation before it reaches Cabinet.

This is not just about numbers—it's about people's dignity, survival and constitutional rights. We urge the Committee to act swiftly, hold National Treasury accountable, demand transparency and open the BIS policy to public scrutiny.

Our key demands to Parliament:

- Halt implementation of Treasury's harmful conditions;
- Demand public release of the BIS policy draft before Cabinet submission;
- Ensure public consultation on all grant-related reforms;
- Request full, disaggregated SRD grant data from SASSA;
- Allow UBI to formally present to the Committee on these urgent issues.

***For media queries and or interviews, contact Oliver Meth on 068 352 9045 or email [oliver@blacksash.org.za](mailto:oliver@blacksash.org.za)***

**—ENDS—**

#### **ABOUT UBI:**

The Universal Basic Income Coalition is a collective of civil society, labour and grassroots organisations which advocate for the realisation of the constitutional right to social assistance for all, by way of a universal and adequate basic income.

UBI and the communities we represent have a keen interest in the administration of the SRD grant, which is the vehicle by which the government plans to expand the social protection floor to those currently excluded. UBI has made numerous submissions to regulatory processes, and repeatedly pointed to various issues plaguing the system which contribute to widespread, systemic exclusion of eligible persons—that is, able-bodied working-age adults with means below R624 per month.

UBI is comprised of the following organisations:

Alternative Information and Development Centre (AIDC)  
Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN) – Africa UBI Observatory

Black Sash

Children's Institute, UCT

Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

The Family Caregiving Programme

Global Reformed Advocacy Platforms for Engagement (GRAPE)

Institute for Economic Justice (IEJ)

National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU)

#PayTheGrants

RightfulShare An Income Movement

South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU)

Women on Farms Project

Youth Lab