



National Gambling Board  
South Africa  
a member of the dtic group

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NATIONAL GAMBLING BOARD WARNS SOUTH AFRICANS AGAINST ILLEGAL ONLINE GAMBLING AND URGES RESPONSIBLE PLAY DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON

Pretoria, 11 December 2025

As millions of South Africans prepare for the festive season, the National Gambling Board (“NGB”) is issuing a strong warning regarding the surge in illegal online gambling platforms, while urging consumers to gamble responsibly and seek help early if they experience signs of problem gambling. December is historically a period of increased gambling activity, which places financially vulnerable consumers at heightened risk.

The NGB reminds the public that online gambling is illegal in South Africa, except for bets placed on online platforms of licensed operators. Any online casino, as well as betting app offering online gambling outside of horse-racing or sports betting, or offshore foreign gambling platform not licensed in South Africa and offering illegal online gambling is operating unlawfully.

**Illegal online gambling websites often appear legitimate and aggressively target South Africans through social media, SMS, WhatsApp groups, or influencer marketing. The public is urged to be cautious, as:**

- Illegal operators do not pay out winnings reliably.
- Consumers who gamble illegally have no legal protection, and winnings may be forfeited.
- Participating in illegal gambling is a criminal offence and can result in fines or prosecution.
- Funds spent on illegal sites fuel unlawful operations that undermine South Africa's regulated gambling framework and national revenue.

Only gambling operators displaying a valid provincial licence issued by a Provincial Licensing Authority (“PLA”) and displayed at the point of operation are authorised to provide gambling services in South Africa.

The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the NGB, Mr. Lungile Dukwana, says: “The festive season often brings increased financial pressure and emotional stress, which can escalate risky gambling behaviour. Problem gambling can affect anyone, regardless of age, background, or income level. Early intervention is key to avoiding financial loss, relationship breakdown, or mental-health harm.” The NGB urges families, communities, and individuals to look out for early warning signs of compulsive or problematic gambling, including:

- Spending more time and money on gambling than intended
- Chasing losses or believing a “big win” will solve financial problems
- Borrowing money, selling possessions, or using credit to gamble

- Hiding gambling activities or lying to friends and family
- Neglecting work, family, or social responsibilities
- Feeling anxious, guilty, or irritable when unable to gamble
- Using gambling as an escape from stress, loneliness, or frustration

**The NGB encourages consumers who choose to gamble during the holiday season to adopt the following responsible gambling practices:**

- Treat gambling as entertainment, not a source of income
- Set a budget and never exceed it
- Never gamble under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Avoid gambling when feeling stressed or emotionally overwhelmed
- Take regular breaks and avoid long gambling sessions
- Do not use money intended for essentials (rent, food, school fees)
- Only gamble with **licensed operators**

South Africa Responsible Gambling Foundation ("SARGF") provides free, confidential assistance for individuals and families affected by gambling harm. The NGB, together with its partners, urges the public to seek help early. Services available nationally, you can contact SARGF using any of the following:

- 24-Hour Toll Free Counselling Line: 0800 006 008
- WhatsApp or SMS SARGF: 076 675 0710
- Email is available: [counsellor@responsiblegambling.co.za](mailto:counsellor@responsiblegambling.co.za)

Self-exclusion programmes are also available, allowing consumers to be barred from accessing licensed gambling venues and platforms in the event a customer identifies that they have a gambling problem. A customer may contact their nearest Provincial Licensing Authority ("PLA") or a licensed gambling operator to volunteer to self-exclude.

"No one needs to suffer in silence; help is accessible, non-judgmental, and completely confidential. Together, we can protect South African consumers. The NGB remains committed to ensuring that gambling in South Africa is conducted legally, responsibly, and in a manner that protects the public from harm. Consumers are encouraged to report illegal gambling websites, suspicious operations, or unlicensed activities," says Mr. Dukwana. Report Illegal Gambling by contacting the NGB switchboard on **010 003 3475** or sending an email to [info@ngb.org.za](mailto:info@ngb.org.za)

With increased vigilance from both consumers and regulators, South Africa can ensure a safer gambling environment during the festive season and beyond.

## **THE END**

### ABOUT THE NATIONAL GAMBLING BOARD

The National Gambling Board (NGB), an agency of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (dtic), was established in terms of the National Gambling Act, Act No 33 of 1996 which was repealed on 01 November 2004 by the National Gambling Act, 2004, (Act No 7 of 2004) ('the Act'). The Act makes provision for the oversight of matters relating to casinos, bingo, betting and wagering and Limited Payout Machines (LPMs), and promotes uniform norms and standards in relation to gambling throughout South Africa.

The strength of the NGB is informed by multiple decades of regulating a gambling industry which was fragmented with low credibility from the pre-1994 era. Its performance outcome is an effectively regulated and continuously supervised gambling industry, which is a significant economic sector that upholds national and internationally recognised standards of compliance and consequently national and international industry reputation.

The NGB is a regulator with concurrent competencies with the provincial gambling regulators. Its work is to ensure harmonisation and consistency with the National Gambling Act and its statutes. The NGB provides a stable environment within which the gambling industry can grow its operations for the benefit of all.

Additionally, the NGB prioritises broad-based public education around illegal gambling and responsible gambling in the best interest of the South African public, balancing a capable state, with the economic growth of the industry and social cohesion.

#### **Vision**

To position South Africa as the pre-eminent jurisdiction with an exemplary and effectively regulated gambling industry.

#### **Mission**

Lead the regulation of the gambling industry in the fulfilment of the National Gambling Act, 2004, through an effectively regulated and supervised gambling industry that upholds domestic, continental and internationally recognised standards of compliance.