

# State 'yet to compensate apartheid victims'

No relief years after the TRC's recommendation

By **Farren Collins**

A former senior Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) official has lambasted government for the slow pace in providing reparations to those who had been identified as victims of apartheid.

Nearly two decades after the ad hoc restorative justice body made its recommendations to provide relief for victims, the President's Fund – which was established to finance the recommended reparations – had grown to about R1.5-bil-

lion while thousands of victims continued to suffer.

"I'm getting close to giving up on whether the government actually appreciates the pain of those victims of apartheid atrocities who need reparations," said former TRC commissioner and head of the commission's investigative unit Dumisa Ntsebeza.

"It's amazing that a fund that was established at the turn of the century has still not benefited those for whom it was intended.

"I've reached a point where I'm completely disappointed in the manner in which the President's Fund has either been financed or has dealt with whatever funds there are.

"I haven't had any indication that the kinds of beneficiaries



Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and other commissioners during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in the mid- and late-1990s. / JON HRUSA

who should have been recipients of the proceeds of the fund are actually getting anything."

Once-off payments of R30 000 were made to 17 408 beneficiaries who have been identified as victims by the TRC. Altogether 21 676 people applied to the TRC.

Ntsebeza pointed out that government had not implemented certain reparations according to the commission's recommendations.

"We recommended R2 000

per month for a period of six years," he said.

"And we believed it would not have cost the fiscus any more than they would have been able to recover from the implementation of the wealth tax, which we also suggested."

The Justice Ministry, which is the custodian of the President's Fund, said the fund would benefit only TRC-identified victims, their dependents or next of kin.

The spokesman for the min-

istry, Mthunzi Mhaga, said the available money in the President's Fund had been provisionally allocated towards the implementation of the various forms of reparations.

The national director of apartheid victims support group Khulumani, Marjorie Jobson, said there are over 100 000 people with legitimate claims for reparations, and the TRC only reached people who represented the more advantaged victims.



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