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Our Ref.: SPATE OF DISASTROUS THEFT AND VADALISM	Your Ref.:

SPATE OF DISASTROUS THEFT AND VANDALISM

CENTLEC (SOC) Ltd is concerned about the spate of theft and vandalism of valuable infrastructure which has risen to disastrous levels, threatening essential services and lives in our area of operation. This can be evident in the latest incidents recorded whereby CENTLEC's infrastructure was vandalized, and equipment stolen.

On the 30th of June 2023, a joint operation by CENTLEC Security Services, lead by the elite South African Police Services, the Hawks, saw one person arrested for allegedly operating an unlicensed scrap metal business and being in possession of stolen copper cable in Seloshesha, Thaba-Nchu. On their arrival at the business premises, the police found burnt copper cable weighing +- 96 kg. The cable was positively identified as the property of CENTLEC. The suspect was arrested by the police and charged with the contravention of the Criminal Matters Act of 2015, theft and operating an illegal business. He is currently in police custody. The police are on the lookout for another suspect by the name of Mr. Paul Chauke, it is believed that he is the owner of the Scrap Metal Shop. He is currently on the run and considered a fugitive by the law. Case number: CAS 52/07/2023 was allocated by Seloseha police station.

Another incident took place on the 03rd of July 2023 at one of our distribution centers, De wet Distribution Centre, in Bloemfontein where communication network cables (Braze Bars) and 16 X 4 cables communicating to the transformer were stolen leaving the communities of General de Wet, Hospitaalpark, Uitsig, Flora, Fauna, Fichardtpark, Vista Park without power for extended period. The case of theft, and vandalism of valuable infrastructure was opened at Parkroad Police Station. No arrest has been made so far.

The damage caused because of theft is estimated at R 1, 2 Million. These are monies which could have been used to maintain and strengthen our network to ensure sustainable supply of electricity to the community of Mangaung. We appeal to the community in the surrounding areas to assist the police in identifying the perpetrators of this crime.

On Saturday, the 22nd of June 2023, CENTLEC Security Services received a tip off from one of the community members alleging that there is an electricity tampering or theft at one of the alcohol business establishments in Botshabelo, Section N.

Upon investigation, our Revenue Collection team found that indeed the meter has been tampered with and that the owner of the business establishment was unable to justify his electricity consumption compared to the amount he spent on electricity. A fine of R 37 434 was issued and the meter removed.

Several days after the fine was issued, CENTLEC Revenue Protection team revisited the premises where the meter and a fine were imposed, upon arrival they had noticed that the new electricity meter was installed, and the meter was confirmed to have been stolen from one of the households in Botshabelo area. The suspect is alleged to have paid R 2800 to re-connect electricity illegally at his premises. A case of theft, and contravention of the Criminal Matters Act of 2015 was opened at the Boithuso Police Station. Case number: CAS 98/07/2023 was issued. The suspect remains in police custody. If found guilty, the suspect faces a maximum sentence of 15 years direct imprisonment.

Members of the public are advised that tampering, electricity theft and vandalism of valuable infrastructure remain a serious crime in South Africa and carries a harsh sentence upon those found guilty.

We would like to thank the public, including community forums such as neighbourhood watch and CPF for the work well done and giving us tip-offs whenever these kinds of incidents are to happen. Fighting crime is a collaborative effort between the community, police and CENTLEC.

Illegal connections, theft and vandalism of electricity infrastructure can be reported to the nearest police station or to the CENTLEC fraud hot line at (051) 409 2218; WhatsApp: 064 616 5574 or email fraudandcorruption@centlec.co.za.

Issued by Communications and Marketing.

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