

## **BAT-SA PLEDGES ALL OF R30m TAX REBATE FROM SARS TO FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL TOBACCO**

**Cape Town, 07 March 2019** - BRITISH American Tobacco South Africa (BAT-SA) today (Sunday) announced that it will commit all of a R30mn SARS rebate to the #TakeBackTheTax initiative fighting the illegal trade in cigarettes.

BATSA, which collected and paid more than R9.1 Billion in taxes in South Africa last year, expects to receive the rebate, for overpaid taxes, shortly.

It will be committed directly to tackling the massive illegal trade in cigarettes being run by criminal billionaires which currently costs South African taxpayers R8 billion every single year.

Johnny Moloto for BAT-SA said the money would be allocated to the successful #TakeBackTheTax initiative.

"#TakeBacktheTax has shone a light on the illegal activities of these criminal billionaires who are robbing South Africans and we are proud to continue supporting it," said Mr Moloto.

"We are also highly encouraged by the actions that have been taken by the new SARS leadership in cracking down on this illegal trade after years of deliberate neglect."

The Nugent Commission heard, directly, that SARS was deliberately neutered to allow illegal cigarette manufacturers break the law with impunity and leech billions of Rand every year out of the pockets of South Africans.

"BAT-SA was not a beneficiary of this corruption by rogue SARS agents. It, like all other taxpayers in South Africa, was a target. We are the only local tobacco manufacturer in the country that declares all our production and pays all our taxes," added Mr Moloto.

Meanwhile, BATSA said that reports today that it owes R143m (equivalent to less than six days of the tax it collects and pays to SARS every year) to the tax authorities are false.

"We don't owe any money for underpaying tax. We are, in fact, owed money for overpaying. That is why we are due this R30m rebate.

“We are very confident than any analysis of our operations and the volumes of documentary evidence we have supplied to SARS by any auditor with the appropriate experience in Customs & Excise will conclude that we are utterly compliant, fully paid up and due the rebate that will be used to continue to fight the illegal trade,” said Mr Moloto.

“South Africans continue to be ripped off by connected billionaires who are taking at least R20 million every single day out of their pockets. These criminals are the enemies of the State and of the people.”

**ENDS**

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