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## **Expired Food Donation Parcels allegedly Delivered to Communities**

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Videos expressing anger against expired grocery hand-outs have recently been circulated on social media platforms. On April 18 2020, the state took the long awaited decision to assist the poor and those who work for a pittance to cope with the pressure of the pandemic through the provision of food parcels. According to the videos, the groceries provided have passed their sell-by date, and yet are being given to communities as a donation during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Three different videos from separate people were circulated. In the first 47 second video products labelled 'Mutton Stew' and 'Mexican Chicken' are shown. These packets in green packaging have a new date, 31 October 2020, superimposed on an earlier, different "best before" date. The Mutton Stew is shown to have expired on 28 March 2020 while the 'Mexican Chicken' reached its sell-by date on 11 January 2020.

A second video also shows similar green packages of different flavours, also expired, but stamped with a new expiry dates. 'Barbeque rice' expired on 7 December 2019 the 'Beef, Samp and Beans' expired on 10 February 2020, and the 'Savoury rice' on 7 February 2020.

In the background of the video, someone can be heard saying, "Is this what we mean to this government of ours?" The speaker responds; "You have to eat this as a poor person", he continues, referring to the maize meal allegedly containing weevils. In the video, what appear to be weevils can be seen in the maize meal being poured out of a bag. He expressed concern that some people will not see the expiry dates but will simply start cooking the expired items.

An outcry against expired food delivered by the government-contracted provider has also been reported elsewhere: the SANDF complained that the food they received was expired.

It is still not clear if the government has done anything about reports of the expired groceries delivered on its behalf. There are only unconfirmed reports that government officials have made a promise that the groceries will be recalled and new ones will be handed out to the communities concerned.

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