

Outa asks donor agencies for cash

By [Nicky Smith](#)

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The cash-strapped Opposition to Urban Tolling Alliance (Outa) has approached unnamed donor agencies for financial support as it continues to battle to have the road toll programme scrapped.



Outa is appealing for cash to help it fight legal challenges over e-tolls. Image: iConcept [Fotolia](#)

Outa has struggled to pay its bills despite having raised about R11.7m to pay for the four unsuccessful legal challenges it waged since 2012.

The group is eyeing the possibility of having to build up financial reserves in order to pay for the cost of the first test case for non-payment of tolls. It still owes its lawyers about R2m.

Outa chairman Wayne Duvenage declined to name the donor agencies for fear that the government would put pressure on them in the same way he said businesses had been discouraged from financially contributing to Outa.

"We don't want to talk about the donor bodies because we don't want to make our life difficult. It is difficult already and government has already done this before by putting pressure on business not to support us. We don't want the donor bodies to turn us down because the cause is unpopular with the government," he said.

Duvenage said Outa had been overwhelmed by complaints from the public, with more than 400 being registered on the organisation's website in the past two weeks.

Serious problems

"What is unfolding is supporting our view that there are serious problems with the system's technical capability. That is something we have been talking about since the beginning of our court case - that the complexities inherent in the system make it massively cumbersome, onerous and unworkable," he said.

Outa had received complaints from people who had not used the toll road but had received demands for payment from the Electronic Toll Collection company, which is managing toll collection for the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral).

"What is unfolding is that the tolling company is relying on e-Natis (electronic national administration traffic information system) and [Pay My Fines](#) to gather money. We are finding innocent people are being caught in cross hairs. People who are dead, people who never used the roads, old ladies living in Cape Town, kids not old enough to drive are getting threatening SMSes and e-mails demanding payment of e-tolls. You can imagine the impact this has on innocent people," he said.

Sanral spokesman Vusi Mona said the number of e-tags in circulation had continued to rise and is now about 963,000. He said the largest group of e-tags owners were private vehicle users, which was encouraging. He said Sanral had received a lot of complaints about the toll roads, many a result of road users not understanding how much the tariffs were.

He said the obligation to pay toll fees arose when a car passed under a gantry and not when a road user was sent an invoice. "Tolls were paid without invoices at manned toll plazas throughout the country without motorists being issued with an invoice first," he said.



Wayne Duvenage says the e-tolls system is cumbersome and unworkable. Image: YouTube

Outa has written to the Office of the Public Protector to ask that a mediation process be convened for all stakeholders so that information can be shared over concerns that have arisen since the system was implemented on 3 December.

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