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PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at 15:00.

The Speaker took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE SPEAKER: I would like to announce that in today's Question Paper, there are questions that have been transferred from written to oral questions in terms of Rule 146. All these questions are directed to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans. Consequently, an additional 30 minutes will be added to today's question time for this purpose as provided for in terms of Rule 137(5) (b).

Today, we have questions to the Ministers in the Peace and Security cluster. The only item on today's Order Paper is

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questions addressed to Ministers in the cluster. There are four supplementary questions on each question.

Parties have given an indication of which questions their members wish to pose as supplementary questions. Adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose. The members who will pose supplementary questions would be recognised by the presiding officer.

In accordance with the opportunities for supplementary questions, the principle of fairness among others has been applied. If a member who is supposed to ask a supplementary question through the virtual platform is unable to do so for technical difficulties, the party Whip on duty will be allowed to ask the question on behalf of their member. When all the supplementary questions have been answered by the executive, we will proceed to the next question on the Order Paper.

The first question has been asked by the Honorable X Nqola to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development. The question is about the department's progress in implementing the Public Protector's instruction to conduct an audit of all courts to assess their infrastructure needs in relation to gender-based

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violent cases, as outlined in the report of systemic investigation into administrative deficiencies relating to gender-based violence and whether a department has met the given deadline of 30 April 2025.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY

CLUSTER 1: PEACE AND SECURITY

Question 499:

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Speaker, I appreciate the question from hon Nqola. On gender-based violence, the department has adopted a victim-centred approach, which is aimed at ensuring that the victims are given the best services but also, are able to be attended to in a conducive environment to deal with cases and avoid secondary victimisation.

The minor capital works audit of the 38 courts visited by the Public Protector was prioritised and included in the 82 courts targeted in the 2024-25 financial year, in terms of upgrading and the work that needs to be done. I must highlight that, despite the initial target that was given, the department has successfully completed 108 minor capital works projects,

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exceeding the planned scope, but in response to the need that arises and therefore being able to do more with less.

In addition, the Public Protector required that an audit of the furniture and office equipment also be finalised within 180 calendar days from the date of the report. Unfortunately, this deadline was not met and therefore an extension was required and requested from the Public Protector to finalise the audit.

I can report that the audit of all nine provinces has been completed and procurement plans have been initiated for this financial year, so that we can be able to implement. Over and above that, the Deputy Minister and I have been able to visit some of the courts to ensure that we see for ourselves the status of our courts. We were also dealing with the infrastructure and the filing to ensure that the records and the files are ready and kept safe and victims are able to go to court without any delays and postponements due to administrative issues. Thank you very.

Mr O M MATHAFA: Speaker, thank you, Minister, for the comprehensive response. Considering the genesis of the report of the Public Protector and the frustration and pain experienced by

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victims and survivors of gender-based violence, how is the department measuring client satisfaction in the handling of matters of gender-based violence? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Currently, there is not a formal system that is unified or specifically looking at gender-based violence and femicide, GBVF, cases, so we utilise the overall mechanisms of analysis and feedback in terms of the work that has been done in all our courts.

It is something that we are looking at, but more so for us is that we work together with, for example, the NGOs who are working within our court systems. We also do our own monitoring in terms of the tracking of data. We are able to check the time it takes for reports to be received. I must report that, as the Justice, Crime Prevention, and Security, JCPS, cluster, we actually recently as well looked at our intervention to see whether we are responding adequately and where the gaps are.

We also have a 90-day turnaround plan to improve. The justice and constitutional development cluster has a pillar or a framework that has been assigned to ensure that we all operate

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in an integrated manner as the JCPS and that we have victim-centric approach. Thank you.

Adv G BREYTENBACH: Hon Speaker, hon Minister, security in our courts depends, of course, largely on the effective screening of everyone who enters our court buildings. What steps can be taken to ensure that scanners and other security systems work effectively, are repaired and maintained properly and timeously, and more importantly, are replaced before the end of their lifespan? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Definitely, this is one of the issues we have done. Even in our meeting with the Chief Justice and the Heads of Court, this has become an important issue for us to look at.

I must say with the cuts in terms of budgets, unfortunately, there are limits. But what we have done is to look at augmenting where we have challenges in terms of infrastructure, for example, the ICT equipment for searching. We augmented it with human beings and physical security. According to the report we get is, it sometimes is not sufficient.

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So, we are looking at courts that literally have high incident rates to be prioritised and we are also looking at areas to be augmented by security such as our police officers who are actually at the courts as part of the security. It is one of the areas that we continue to work on, as we think that the situation currently is not satisfactory at our courts.

Recently, shootings took place in the Wynberg Municipal Court and in a court in KwaZulu-Natal. And this is what we are trying to avoid, as we do analysis to check what would have been the cause.

We need IT equipment that are placed high, so that it cannot be tampered with. For that we need quite a lot of money. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER: Minister, are you done?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes.

Dr T K S LETLAPE: Speaker, I will take the question on behalf of hon Trollip. Minister, is there any intervention that the Minister can come up with to help with the endless postponement

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of cases of GBV that leaves those of us that are victims with an inability to find closure? We have cases that are postponed for up to four or five years.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon member, what we have done as the department together with the judiciary was to ... Previously, there used to be a committee that monitored overall case backlog, look at what are the causes, because you find that the reasons are different. So, what we have done was to re-establish that committee to try and assist in dealing with case backlog. More so, what we have found, especially in cases that relate to children, is that we have a challenge in terms of our technology, because the SOS that is supposed to be utilised, especially when children testify, would be at the end of the lifespan. I think that hon Breytenbach was also speaking about it. You would find that there would be a different lifespan.

Currently, for those systems, the department is looking at their own procurement process but has also called on partnership to ensure that we can deal with it.

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Secondly, sometimes, the delays are because of the defendant. So, they would utilise all avenues to delay a court proceeding. And unfortunately, or fortunately, because of our laws, it must be done and the court must follow that process. Otherwise, the person can say that they did not have a fair trial and the process was not correct. That can lead to appeals and appeals. So, it is one of those things that we must deal with.

Furthermore, we have identified that the Criminal Procedure Act needs to be reviewed. We are looking at introducing this. According to the JCPS, we must introduce it latest by September to Cabinet, so that it can come to Parliament. And it is one of the areas that will assist us in the delays and improve on handling some of the cases. One of the proposals is to deal with issues of bail in gender-based violence. [Time expired.] Thank you.

Mr S N SWART: Speaker, arising from your response, hon Minister, the ACDP appreciates the progress that has been made in dealing with the remedial action, as set out in the Public Protector's report. Now, the seventh remedial action called upon the rollout of online applications for domestic violence orders, to assist victims to apply after hours and remotely.

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This, the ACDP believes, is very important. And had it been available, Ms Korcha's, whose tragic death that resulted in the Public Protector's inquiry, life could have been saved. You indicated in your reply on 8 April that the solution to online applications is currently being taken through a quality assurance and it will be deployed.

Hon Minister, has this quality assurance been completed and when will the online application system be deployed as this, as I indicated, is a very important tool to fight gender-based violence? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Speaker, hon Swart, yes, indeed, the quality assurance process has been completed. We are in the pilot phase and I am told that the results are positive.

We are able to start implementing the online application system, especially now that it is on the protection orders that can be done online. We have also issued the instructions to our prosecutors, in terms of the guidelines of handling some of these issues. What we are now working on, together with the police is around the implementation or the execution of the

protection orders. And this is part of what we are doing with the 90-day intervention programme. Thank you.

Question 534:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon Speaker, the draft firearm amendment regulation doesn't constitute regulatory overreach. The proposed measures are reconsidered and evident-based response to serious risks observed within segments of the private security industry.

Incidents such as the sale and false reporting of firearms by security company in Mpumalanga and the discovery of unauthorized possessions of over 440 firearms by a Cape Town firm underscore widespread vulnerabilities in firearm control.

Moreover, the industry reported over 1 600 firearms lost or stolen between 2023 and 2024, reflecting critical lapses in accountability and internal control systems.

These patterns of misconduct not only endanger public safety but also erode public confidence in the industry's ability to manage lethal weapons responsibly.

In this context, the regulations are not excessive but necessary. These regulations aim to enhance traceability, ensure uniform standard of compliance and address gaps that allow firearms to be diverted into criminal hands.

By introducing stricter licensing, training and audit requirements, the regulatory framework will strengthen oversight, deter misuse and promote a culture of lawful firearm stewardships.

This is far from penalizing compliant providers as the regulations seek to uplift the industry's overall standard and reaffirm its role as a legitimate and trusted extension of public safety infrastructure.

The amendment regulations do not seek to disarm the industry, as the authority does not issue firearm licenses. Security officers will still protect themselves if they are competent to handle firearms.

In the main, these amendments seek to regulate the issuing, possession and use of firearms in the private security industry

and ensure that private security companies operate with proportionality, professionalism and public accountability.

There have been notable incidences where security companies have been involved in criminal activities, just to mention a few. Firearms sold and fastly reported as stolen.

In Mpumalanga the owner of a security company was arrested for allegedly selling dozens of firearms, including rifles and pistols to another security company and then falsely reporting these firearms as stolen. This act not only violated firearm control laws but also posed a significant risk to public safety by potentially placing weapons into unregulated hands.

In Cape Town a security firm was found in possession of 42 firearms, 34 pistols and eight shotguns that were licensed to a different company based in Centurion. The discovery led to the arrest of a 57-year-old suspect and raised concerns about the practice of fronting, where companies unlawfully share or transfer firearm licenses.

Between 2023 and 2024 private security companies reported ...

[Time expired.]

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Mr I CAMERON: Deputy Minister, given concerns from stakeholders that the draft regulations may impose blanket restrictions without distinguishing between higher risk and lower risk security operations.

Could the department have conducted a regulatory impact assessment to determine how these rules would affect different categories of service providers, particularly smaller firms or those operating in rural areas? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon Speaker, the regulations will not in any way impact the private security industry. They are meant to ensure that at all material times firearms are controlled and we know what is happening both to those who will be selling firearms and those who will be buying firearms for their security companies, is to mend to regulate and make sure that we're able to trace where firearms are at any particular given time. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Deputy Minister, in light of the recently published draft regulations of the Private Security Industry Regulation Act, Act 56 of 2001, and considering that South

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Africa's private security sector is the largest in Africa, employing over 500 000 registered security officers.

How does the Minister justify the introduction of stringent firearm restrictions that threaten to cripple the operational capacity of legitimate security providers who contribute to community safety, where SA Police Service, SAPS, remains under-resourced and understaffed, under International Monetary Fund, IMF, industry's debt driven austerity measures?

Furthermore, can the Minister provide specific evidence and data demonstrating that the proposed restrictions target the primary sources of firearm misuse in South Africa, rather than imposing bureaucratic barriers on compliance ... [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Speaker, the regulations are in no way intended to cripple the security industry, their intention is to control the movement of firearms. As I've explained earlier on, where a security company sold their firearms to another security company without following due processes.

So, these regulations are intended to make sure that as you buy firearms for your own use, at a time that you no longer in need of those particular firearms you must be able to send them back properly to the people who are designated to deal with that.

So, it will never in any way make it difficult or create a stringent environment for control. It is going to be easy for the industry to comply where the need arises. And if people come to do inspection, they'll be able to see what has happened to the firearms that you have bought at any given stage.

The role that the security industry continues to play as a force multiplier to support the police, they will continue to do so. The regulations will not be a hindrance in that regard. Thank you, Speaker.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Minister, in the light of the growing dominance of the private security industry now exceeding the South African Police Service in both manpower and firepower: Do you consider the recently introduced regulations a tacit admission that the state has lost effective control over the sector?

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And given the concerning increase in lost and stolen firearms in the hands of private security companies, 1 648 in 2023-24 and 847 reported in just the first half of 2024-25, and recent media reports linking some security firms to extortion political assassinations and violence within the taxi industry: Do you believe that the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority, PSiRA, has sufficient capacity to monitor compliance and curb criminality in the sector?

And what's ... [Inaudible.] ... interventions ... [Inaudible.] ... to ensure accountability ... [Inaudible.] ... public safety? Thank you, Speaker.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon Paulsen, yes, indeed the number of security companies has risen in the country. The introduction of the regulation is not in any way a submission of our inability to oversee the sector. PSiRA is capable and it has demonstrated on several occasions that it is able to oversee this specific sector.

The regulations are intended to control the management and the movement of firearms that are bought and are in control of the security industry. This will further assist us to be able to do

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the work that PSiRA is mandated to do in terms of the law.

Thanks, hon Speaker.

Mrs H DENNER: Hon Deputy Minister, I wish it was not the case but unfortunately, as we all very well know, the police cannot adequately protect South African citizens. That's why millions of us rely on private security services for protection.

The regulations to the Private Security Industry Regulation Act has created the widespread perception, and I think it's been echoed here today as well, that the Department of Police is attempting to sabotage or restrict, and I think you yourself used the word cripple, the private security industry while it could actually aid the police in ensuring peace and security and keeping all of us safe.

Deputy Minister, you also used the phrase 'force multiplier', and I think that was quite ... [Inaudible.] ... So, does the department have any concrete plans or strategy in utilizing or working with the private security industry to, indeed, multiply your force and keep all of us safe and ensure peace and security? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon Speaker, it's incorrect to say that the South African police is failing to protect the people of South Africa. We are not. And the issue ... the role that the private security is playing it's an important role that we acknowledge as SAPS and we do work with them.

There are a number of examples that we can give where we are working together with the security industry to fight crime. For instance, within the cash-in-transit space, we are working together with that industry to deal with cash-in-transit crime.

The regulations, as I said, are intended to control firearms. They are not intended to cripple the security industry and they will not in any way do that.

Yes, there is a perception, that's why we're having this discussion, that the regulations are intended to cripple the private security industry. But that is not the intention. The intention is outlined in the regulations themselves. It is just that those who are in the space, they have a feeling or a view that the intention is to cripple the industry. But it is not. Thank you, hon Speaker.

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Question 482:

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms K P S Ntshavheni): Hon Speaker, thank you for this opportunity to respond to the question. The State Security Agency, SSA, is aware of the proliferation of airstrips across South Africa. The response to the monitoring of the airstrips relates to the monitoring of the airspaces which is the mandate of the SA National Defence Force, which is the SA Air Force. And SSA forms part of National Security Committee which has appointed dedicated capacity to investigate the risk associated with the limited monitoring of airstrips in South Africa and SSA forms part of this committee which is led by the Defence Force Air Force.

However, in pursuit of our mandate as the SSA and in support of the Department of Transport, we conduct continuous airport security risk assessment, and this work covers all public airports and private airports. This work has been extended from this financial year to cover aerodromes or small airports and airfield so that we can operate within our mandate to deal with the concerns that have been raised by the hon member. Thank you, hon Speaker

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The CHIEF OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr M Manyi): Hon Minister, if these suspicious airstrips are truly being kept under surveillance as you make us believe, then how do you explain the ongoing smuggling of drugs, human trafficking, proliferation of unlicensed firearms and ammunition, endangered wildlife and foreign currency through these strips, all without not a single interception reported by the SSA. Could it be that the infamous Phala Phala dollars have also entered through this route in these farm strips given that the SA Revenue Service, Sars, custom at all official airports have no record of such transactions, are we to conclude, Minister, that your agency has failed to detect these threats or that elements of the states are actually complicit? Thank you.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms K P S Ntshavheni): Hon speaker, as we have indicated, we've extended the security risk assessment to the aerodrome so that we can deal with that concern. However, the monitoring of airspaces which the members referring to relates to the work of the Air Force. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Ms D KOHLER: Speaker, we have some 400 airports and private airstrips and, on the hold, they cater to local communities,

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private businesspeople and aviation enthusiasts. And as I've always stated, there are amongst those airstrips which are used under the radar to drop off drugs, take out drugs, move kidnap victims, export poached tusks or living animals. The list is very long indeed. However, the majority of these strips are used legitimately for tourists to get to game farms for medical transport to stock farms.

So, is the SSA hopefully working in tandem with crime intelligence targeting those trips used for criminal activities while clearing those who aren't? I fear, obviously, that the SSA will do what they tend to do, block all use by anyone in case some use is criminal. Is that the case or not? What is the risk level? Thank you.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms K P S Ntshavheni): Hon Speaker, as I've indicated in my earlier response, we have extended the coverage of the work of security risk assessment to cover the aerodromes, and this has commenced this year in terms of the assessment. It is not our responsibility as the SSA to decide who operates, who doesn't operate in a strip. Our responsibility is to conduct security assessment and provide the report to the relevant authorities who will then take a decision

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of the implementation. Our job is to support also the work of the aviation committee that is set up by government for us to make sure that all risk and prevention of crime taking place in this country or any threat to national security is attended to. Thank you, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Hon Niehaus? Sorry, hon Nehaus, you can take a seat. Hon Manyi, what's the point of order.

The CHIEF OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr M Manyi): Speaker, I'm not here to dictate how the Minister must answer.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The CHIEF OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr M Manyi): But this is a very important issue we're dealing with. If we're the Cabinet Minister, that's not able to give an answer that gives comfort, that issues of national security are taken care of and she keeps deflecting to SA National Defence Force, SANDF, all the time. This is totally unacceptable, Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Hon member, but I'm sure you would recall that in the beginning, the Minister did outline what the mandate of SSA,

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the mandate of defence but also she indicated that some of the areas that you may have asked, it's only now that has been extended, but obviously you can indicate to the Speaker who will then refer the matter to the Minister where exactly are your concerns in the way in which an answer has been given. Hon Niehaus?

Mr C G NIEHAUS: Speaker, can hon Minister indicate specifically what measures are being taken to prevent these private airstrips from being used to smuggle unlicensed firearms? And especially what further steps are being undertaken to detect legal action and take legal action against illegal paramilitary training camps, often linked to these private airstrips? Disturbingly, these paramilitary training camps are often linked to right wing white supremacist groups who disguise themselves as security companies and self-defence training companies. Thanks.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms K P S Ntshavheni): Hon Speaker, as I've indicated, starting from this financial year, which was 1 of April 2025, we have extended the work of conducting security assessment to aerodromes. Aerodromes are small airports, including an ethics. Why we have extended is because, as I've noted in my earlier response, we are concerned

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about the proliferation, but also the extent of illegal activities taking place which are enabled through the aerodromes. And as I've also replied to, our mandate extends to us during the assessments, which will include the profiling and the risk assessment and providing a report to the relevant department. That's why when respond to the second question I said in support of the work of the Department of Transport, we have extended that work so that we can then provide the security assessment reports and indicate not only to the Department of Transport, but also to the other relevant law enforcement agencies, so that they can then do their work of preventing crime. We, our job is forewarning and to do the necessary profiling. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr W M THRING: Minister, unwanted ... [Interjections.] ... Yes. Are you able to hear me?

The SPEAKER: Yes, we can.

Mr W M THRING: Am I audible?

The SPEAKER: Hon Thring, we can hear you.

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Mr W M THRING: Alright, let me try again. Minister, unmonitored private landing strips in South Africa pose several dangers.

The SPEAKER: Continue asking your question, hon Thring.

Mr W M THRING: I'm trying, Speaker. Minister, unmonitored private landing strips in South Africa pose several dangers, including safety risk from collisions with other aircrafts or objects, potential legal issues with SA Civil Aviation Authority, and the possibility of misuse for illicit activities like drug and human trafficking and the weaponizing of drones for terrorism. These strips can be a source of both risk to our regulated aviation sector and the public if not operated responsibly and within legal frameworks.

Minister, what is your short, medium and long-term plan to remove these risks and prevent the proliferation of unmonitored illegal airstrips and, in this regard, to what extent is their multi-sectoral disciplinary or departmental engagement of law enforcement to uphold the regulations operating of private strips? Thank you. [Time expired]

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The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY (Ms K P S Ntshavheni): Hon Speaker, as I've indicated, given the risk that hon members are alluding to, we chose to extend the coverage of our work to cover the airfields and small airports. The reason being, we want to then be able to provide a comprehensive report that is informed and do the necessary profiling so that we can then advise the law enforcement agencies to prevent the commissioning of crime, to also support the Department of Transport, but also to feedback to the Civil Aviation Committee on airspace monitoring, that is led by the Department of Defence, the Air Force, in terms of the gaps that were found and the improvement that may be required. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Question 504:

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Hon Speaker, South Africa has adopted a distinctive and inclusive approach to foreign policy rooted in the principle of taking diplomacy to the people. The Department of International Relations and Co-operation has implemented a comprehensive outreach programme aligned with Parliamentary People-Centred Oversight Framework. This public participation programme is structured around three pillars - community-based imbizo public engagements. These large-scale public engagements held in both

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rural and urban areas where government leaders interact directly with citizens. During these sessions, officials unpack South Africa's foreign policy objectives, priorities, programmes, achievements, and milestones. The core aim is to bridge the gap between diplomatic work and its tangible impact on the daily lives of ordinary South Africans. These engagements are supported by a robust communication campaign that leverages community media in local languages to ensure accessibility and inclusivity.

Additionally, the outreach is integrated into the national calendar. Events such as the International Nelson Mandela Day serve as a platform to bring members of the diplomatic corps into communities across the country. These occasions are used to educate, inform, and showcase the benefits of South Africa's international relations. Over the past five years, these initiatives have raised and donated more than R3 million to support community projects, hospices, shelters for orphaned children, and homes for the elderly. Some of the engagements hosted by the Department of International Relations and Co-operation include, amongst others, engagement as a Ministry I hosted in a community outreach programme in Mpumalanga, Welverdiend Village in Ehlanzeni District. The event was to

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popularise South Africa's foreign policy objectives and how these relate to the achievements of domestic priorities, including our G20 priorities. Such events will continue. The T20 think tank, Africa High-Level Policy Dialogue addressed by the Deputy President Paul Mashatile at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research International Convention Centre on 29 April 2025. Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation, Ms Thandi Moroka, recently hosted the G20 outreach programme at the University of Venda in Thohoyandou. Minister of Small Businesses, Ms Stella Ndabeni, also recently held an event related to small businesses international platforms in relation to the G20. So, there is such public engagements, including public lectures in our universities, and in international platforms. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Mr M S MOELA: Hon Minister, how does the newly adopted people-centred ...

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members. He is not Mahumapelo, but he is standing in for him as ... order, hon members. Okay, hon member, can you please proceed?

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Mr M S MOELA: I think, in terms of the Rules, I will be taking this question on behalf of the hon Minister Mahumapelo. Hon Minister, how does the newly adopted people-centred oversight mechanisms strengthen and complement existing initiatives such as the Young Diplomatic Candidate Programme, particularly in ensuring that young South Africans from diverse communities are meaningfully engaged in shaping and understanding our foreign policy? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Hon Speaker, the programme for the young diplomats, Cadet, helps to integrate graduates from universities in the country to put them in training for our diplomatic engagements and this has integrated several ... in all institutions across the country, including underprivileged graduates to the level of international relations. This has also helped. We have also recently hosted the inaugural Aziz Pahad Peace, Security, and Human Rights Dialogue in Pretoria on Monday, 31 March 2025, which was addressed by former President Thabo Mbeki, and young diplomats also participated in the platform, looking into the future. We have also recently hosted, in partnership with the Gertrude Shope Women's Mediation Network - a Solidarity Conference on Women, Peace and security - Voices of Women within

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the Global Environment on Escalating Conflict. This has also integrated young diplomats in terms of training them on mediation, in particular young women. So, this programme has been very impactful to bring not only just young diplomats, but young women to participate in processes of mediation and to be able to be trained in this field that is growing and necessary for their voices to be heard. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order, hon members, I just want to advise parties. When you allow your member to take a question for another member, ensure that the member firstly, as hon members of the EFF, Mente, we are advising him to state before if they have not advised the Table, because if they have advised the Table, we will indicate. Secondly, if members are then asked to undertake the responsibility, they must not just do a tick box where they ask questions and leave. The hon member asked a question, even before the Minister responded, he left the room. I do not think that is respectful of the House and its members, as well as the Minister who is being asked a follow-up question. Order, hon members, can we now move to hon Douglas for his follow-up question?

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Mr W M DOUGLAS: Hon Speaker, in light of recent adoption of a people-centred oversight mechanism on international relations and co-operation, which purports to bring communities in villages, townships, small towns, and municipalities into meaningful participation in foreign policy discourse, how does the Minister justify the lack of budget and visible community engagement and public consultation on critical international agreements, foreign mining operations, and its impact on communities and traditional leaders beneficiation over the past eight years, which has direct implications for local economies and job creation? Will there be a budget or is this also going to be more Government of National Unity, NGU, lip service?

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: Hon Speaker, indeed, there is a budget dedicated to our public diplomacy programme. It may not be enough to do everything that we want. It is limited. We will have to use it to the best of what our programme can be able to afford. We can be able to state that this programme is clearly visible across the country now, augmented also by the G20 outreach programme. Also, in relation to the issues he has raised of critical minerals, in all engagements that Department of International Relations and Co-operation is involved in, from Forum on China-Africa Co-

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operation, FOCAC, to the EU, and to all bilateral engagements, we raised issues of community interests, particularly on value addition at source of the critical minerals, which is in the national interest of our country to diversify, to industrialise, and to manufacture at source. So, this continues to be an engagement that becomes especially important as we engage in our international platforms to engage in the national interest of our country. And this is further augmented by the relevant line function department. Thank you very much, hon Speaker.

Mr M A MNCWANGO: Arising from your response, hon Minister, studies by the Human Sciences Research Council, HSRC, and others revealed that misinformation about global affairs and foreign policy is on the rise, particularly in digitally underserved communities. Considering this, what specific methods such as community dialogues, local media engagements or educational partnerships are being used to communicate South Africa's foreign policy objectives to ordinary citizens in rural and under-resourced areas under the people-centred oversight mechanisms?

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION:

Indeed, a very constructive engagement. We continue to

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participate, as I have said, in the public engagements, even at universities platforms, and community outreach programmes that I have already mentioned, including to also point and show where there is fake news, even opinion pieces by various influential government leaders with regards to the correct and accurate situation pertaining to our country. And this has also been contextualised and clarified by His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, particularly in relation to the white Afrikaner farmers and our own Minister of Police, Senzo Mchunu. And the police in South Africa have also clarified the correct accurate description of the data that it does not support the issue of persecution and hate crime in our country, but it is an issue that has been attended to by the police in the context of crime in the Republic. But there is no data that point that there is a targeted criminal activity. So, there is work and the whole of government approach in dealing with all these issues, including Government Communication and Information System, GCIS, leading in most of the public engagement platforms. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Mr S S ZIBI: Given the sudden change in the international relations and trade environment because of the new US Administration, what work is the Minister and his department

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doing with various business associations in South Africa to protect our exports and jobs in South Africa?

The MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION: The question is a bit different, but it is in the interest of the nation that we respond to the question. There is work that the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and ourselves are doing to continue to diversify the markets with all the relevant departments that are responsible in terms of market access in the Middle East, Asia, and other parts of the world, including the global North anchored on the African continent through the platform of the Africa Free Trade Area, which will further augment the work of market diversification. But there is also a continuous engagement with our counterparts in Washington and the US to continue to state the strategic nature of South Africa's bilateral relations with the US which is mutually beneficial. And I must mention that in many other parts of the world, market access and products working with South Africa is warmly welcomed, and this is the work we need to continue to expand on and also to continue to put trust and work with the World Trade Organization, WTO, and other multilateral institutions that are aimed to ensure that there is fair trade

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in the world that will not jeopardize or prejudice developing countries like South Africa. Thank you, hon Speaker.

Question 455:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Allow me to begin my answer by indicating that the model that the government of national unity, GNU, inherited after the May 2024 elections in the Department of Home Affairs was largely based on the idea of brick-and-mortar offices. There are currently 342 such Home Affairs offices across the country as well as the 220 mobile units that the hon member refers to.

However, even under ideal circumstances with full staffing, budget and everything else, this will not be enough to eliminate the queues and long travelling distances that people, particularly in rural areas, face in a country as big as ours and with over 62 million people that need to be served. This is why we are now building a fundamentally new model through our vision to deliver Home Affairs at home.

To bring Home Affairs much closer to home including in rural areas we are working to expand the successful pilot project with bank branches from the current 30 bank branches to over 1000.

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This will instantly expand access across urban and rural areas as clients will then be able to obtain these vital Home Affairs services in their local bank branch without the need to travel great distances, as is already happening in some urban areas. But even this is just the beginning because our ultimate goal is much more ambitious. We want to turn Home Affairs into a fully digital first department. This means that clients will then be able to access our services online through self-service platforms. Once this digital transformation work is complete I can indeed give the assurance that Home Affairs services will become available 24/7 accessible in bank branches, but also online from anywhere in the country. Thank you.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Thank you very much, Speaker. Minister, with all the plans that you are outlining now, we want direct answers with an indication of the 200 and plus mobiles you are talking about. Where are they because the people of Umtata, O R Tambo, Chris Hani and QwaQwa don't have those services? Where are they exactly?

But more importantly, old people, people with small babies, pregnant women and people with disabilities are turned away or cut off from the queues and are expected to come back the

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following day. These are grant recipients. They spend their last R100 or R200 return trip from rural areas to the urban areas for services yet getting turned back with no regard for where they will get another money for transport.

Thirdly, babies are born in hospitals, and only tertiary hospitals have Home Affairs officials in them. Why are other hospitals where the service of giving birth to babies don't have officials of Home Affairs stationed in those hospitals so that babies are recorded and registered right there so that there are no ups and downs? Please, give us an indication of whether the mobiles ... As public representatives we will go to the Home Affairs and take them to the people. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you very much, hon Speaker. Let me just start by indicating that my office is very happy to receive specific issues. I think Mthatha and a number of other cases were mentioned. The hon member could just send that through more broadly on the mobile units. As I indicated there are about 220 of them that are deployed across the country. They are functional in all provinces, but the reality is that they are not enough, and they will never be enough to make sure that

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people don't have to travel and that they don't have to stand in long queues.

The hon member is very correct in her description of what people are subjected to in these areas. They are subjected to this precisely because of what I said in the beginning that the model itself is flawed. It assumes that you can only get these services if you are able to travel 150 km or 200 km to a Home Affairs office. So, the way we are resolving that is, as I indicated, by decentralising access to Home Affairs services and really making it vastly more accessible through deepening that successful pilot project with bank branches but also bringing it on to the mobile devices.

I think the reality we need to understand is that people who stand in those long queues, who are there for routine things like a smart ID application or a passport application, those are the people that we need to get out of the queues through the partnership with the banks and through technology precisely so that we are able to serve more complex cases. What the hon member has indicated is not even yet the worst of it, the worst of it is as it relates to South Africans themselves who are undocumented. At the moment Home Affairs capacity is vastly

overstretched simply because the model itself assumes that people have to go to these brick-and-mortar buildings.

Finally, briefly on the birth registrations, indeed, we are also working on digital transformation in that space so that you are not required to have officials all over the country. You can let technology do the work for you in a secure manner. Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms M L MATHOPA: Thank you very much, Chair. This is quite a challenge and a financial burden on our people queuing for long hours just to be sent home without being serviced. Security guards are being used at the Home Affairs offices to control the queues. As we know, in rural areas our elderly people are not technology savvy. You are talking about bank branches, and they are not user-friendly to our people who are staying in the rural areas.

My question would be, Minister, what strategies are currently in place to improve the deployment and efficiency of these mobile units in underserved areas like the rural areas? How does the Minister plan to expand these efforts to ensure that more consistent service delivery is given to these people because

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even the mobile units are not consistent with their times and days that they are going to the rural areas? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Just on the first point that was raised by the hon member around the queuing and the financial burden, I think we are all ad idem about that. That is exactly as I've indicated why we are going to work to decentralise access so that everyone does not have to go and stand in the same queue, and that they can actually interact with these services where they live, whether that's through a bank branch or through their smart devices.

Secondly, I would dispute the point suggesting that people in rural areas do not use banking services as well as technology. I think South Africa has a huge success story around the uptake of technology in this space, with close to 90% smartphone penetration. I think we give South Africans too little credit when we say that. However, even in those cases where we have people who may not be comfortable using technology or visiting their bank - although I find it hard to believe - the benefits of this reform would be that there are far fewer people in the Home Affairs queues. That is exactly the point that I am making. By making sure that we get more access points through technology

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and through partnership, we are going to take people out of the Home Affairs queues who can use other channels. That will free up Home Affairs to really zoom in on those people who need our help and support the most. I think that that is really where the big benefits will come out of these reforms.

As I indicated, it goes beyond some of the immediate problems. It goes to the problem of South African children who are not documented. We need a dedicated campaign to resolve that and to bring dignity to those people. And we can only do it once we free up capacity and we can do that through partnerships and technology. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Ms C T NONTENJA: Hon Deputy Speaker and hon Minister, the Department of Home Affairs has since embarked on an ambitious digital transformation initiative which is arguably aiming to mitigate the long queues through initiatives such as the recent upgrades to the digital verification system. Has the department implemented any specific measures to ensure that the citizens in remote areas are not further disadvantaged by the recent upgrades, including the department online branch appointment booking system? If so, how does the department plan to ensure

the sustainability and accessibility of these improvements? If not, why?

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker and to the hon member for raising that. The benefits of an improved digital verification service are going to be felt across the board. What many people don't know perhaps is that when you go to a bank or an insurance company or any other financial services entities they are required to verify your identity. That is done against the Home Affairs National Population Register. However, as I mentioned at the beginning, due to the underinvestment and neglect of technology in Home Affairs for a very long time this was not functioning properly and in some cases, it could take 24 hours for a verification to be done and up to 50% of the verifications failed. By investing in upgrading that system we are going to dramatically expand the functionality of South Africa's financial sector. We are going to thereby benefit people in rural areas who can open bank accounts, who can transact and who can get those financial service products in a much more seamless and secure manner through that verification system. That is indeed one of the benefits of our focus on digital transformation.

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But as I've indicated here today, really one of the big things that is coming that is being worked on actively is our ability to dramatically expand access to those smart ID and passport services to bank branches across the country, along with the functionality of using mobile applications. I think those are going to be really exciting steps forward for South Africa. Thank you.

Mr L W MAHLATSI: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Minister, as our country's democracy matures, our collective memory and social imagination begin to faith recalling the Batho Pele principles as introduced by the first democratic government of the Republic. We ought to remind ourselves that the Public Service in the postapartheid dispensation must be administrated in such a way that it remembers the disremembered humanity of African people who continue to be subjected to long queues at Home Affairs outlets and particularly in African communities, not only as a matter of Public Service, but a deliberate attempt of putting "Abantu Batho" [The People] African people first.

Which African communities have been identified by your department for targeted improvement?

Xitsonga:

Khanimamba!

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. While we work to deliver dignity for all South Africans, as I've indicated in the answers so far today, it is going to be through these modernising digital transformation reforms that we achieve that. But let me indicate what is not Batho Pele. What is not Batho Pele is long queues, it is mountains of paperwork and it is getting people to fill in forms when there is technology that can do the job more efficiently. It is not Batho Pele to have a system that in many ways still resembles something from the 1980s due to the way in which it is constructed around the model of brick-and-mortar of papers and manual processes.

Indeed, if we are going to deliver to all South Africans the modern and efficient world-class government that they deserve, it is all going to start with the digital reforms that Home Affairs is working on. I look forward to coming back, and I really believe within a matter of months, to this House to be getting from the members the feedback of how people across the country increasingly are able to access these services through

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those bank branches and eventually through their mobile devices as well. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. The Minister had promised to send the list, but he didn't say when and where will the list of the mobiles go to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Mente. I don't know if the hon Minister is still online and if he could perhaps just take note of that. Hon Minister, I don't know if you are in a position to give an indication of when and where you will send the list of the mobiles.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, I think the indication was for those specific areas that the member has mentioned where there is a need. They can be sent through to my office so that we can assist. I think she mentioned Mthatha and a number of others and I think a follow-up written question on any more information is certainly welcome. Thank you.

Question 468:

Afrikaans:

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Die MINISTER VAN KORREKTIEWE DIENSTE: Adjunkspeaker, ek gaan nie elke woord lees nie, maar ek sal die volledige antwoord indien. [Deputy Speaker, I won't read every word, but I will submit the entire answer.]

English:

I want to start and say there must just be clarity that the finding of the Constitutional Court included that no electronic equipment that would be used in the facilities – in the cells – may have a modem. That is important. Only enrolled students with institutions of higher learning will have access to the computers and study material. On the other hand, the Department of Correctional Services educators will ensure that all distance-learning institutions are registered with the Department of Higher Education and that qualifications are accredited by the SA Qualifications Authority.

Registration at institutions of higher learning is subject to conditions that require the institution to be contacted to determine the requirements for the hardware and software prior to registration. No access to the Internet or any other hardware device that may impact negatively on the good order, administration, and security of the correctional centre is

allowed. Offenders with previous convictions relating to Internet fraud are not allowed to register for any computer-related course.

The head of the correctional centre is responsible for determining whether the inmate convicted of Internet fraud or Internet-related fraud has been sufficiently rehabilitated to be permitted to register for the studies requiring the use of computers, provided their computer access is strictly regulated and monitored. Offenders that require the use of laptops or computers for their studies will be required to sign an undertaking that they will utilise the equipment for the intended purposes only, and the misuse of such equipment and study material will lead to the immediate deprivation of this privilege and must be reported to the head of the correctional centre for consequence management.

Lastly, in addition to this, the Department of Correctional Services information technology services will be tasked to ensure that offenders do not have access to the Internet whilst in their cells, by removing connectivity built-in modems. They will only be able to download their study material online, as

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previously arranged during the day, so that they can complete their assignments online. Thank you.

Ms B E MACHI: Deputy Speaker, to the Minister: Following the ruling by the Constitutional Court affirming the right of inmates to access study materials and use laptops for educational purposes, what are the relevant access details of the monitoring system that has been implemented to ensure that the specified access is not abused to commit further crimes and/or communicate unlawfully with individuals outside the correctional facilities? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Deputy Speaker, I just elaborated on certain steps that will be taken, for instance that, for the specific inmate that wants to use it, the course will be looked into, as well as the criminal record of that specific student. As I have just mentioned, if it happens that the person has a previous conviction where it comes to computer fraud or anything like that, they will not be allowed to do it.

So, I have mentioned the steps we will take to ensure that we comply with the security measures and prevent a situation where inmates in their cells have cellphones and still communicate

with criminals outside our facilities to enhance criminality.
Thank you.

Mr M M SOKOPO: Deputy Speaker, to the Minister: What mechanisms are in place to ensure that laptops' Internet access that is meant for study purposes is not used to facilitate prison escapes and other things? Noting that the majority of correctional centres still do not provide sufficient skills training to equip reoffenders with the necessary skills to make them competent in the job market, what plan does the department have to provide education and a second chance, especially to juveniles?

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Deputy Speaker, firstly, there are different programmes when it comes to learning, where inmates can decide whether they want to participate. In fact, at the beginning of this year, we had a very high success rate in terms of passing the matric examinations. Therefore, the opportunity is there if they want to register.

Let me put it quite clearly: Any inmate can register for any course, even any university degree, if they wish to do so. Of course, they will have to bear the costs for that specific

course. In light of the finding of the Constitutional Court, we will provide every possibility where they can have access, but this is specific, and we have our facilities in the correctional centres where they can, for instance, have access to online courses. Of course, there is also control measures to see whether all the strict rules in terms of security are complied with.

This Constitutional Court finding was more about at night when the inmates are in their cells, and that is why we said that no – and that is also the finding of the Constitutional Court – modems will be allowed. Of course, there will be inspections and checks to ensure that will be complied with. So, they will have access for further learning. In fact, we are actually trying to enhance ... That is part of the rehabilitation process of the inmates, that they will have to comply, as I just said, and that we cannot allow people to use it for other criminal activities.

Mr J ENGELBRECHT: Deputy Speaker, to the Minister: How does the department prevent the unauthorised addition of modems or other communication devices to these laptops, given the prevalence of contraband like cellphones, which can be used to connect laptops to the Internet, in our prisons? In other words, what protocols

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are in place to detect and address any breaches of the stipulated restrictions? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Deputy Speaker, there are standard operating procedures. Part of that, for instance, is to have regular searches in the cells when people enter our facilities because that is also referring to contraband. So, we have the standard operating procedures. We also have, from time to time, unannounced raids to see what we can do.

I think what people are asking is what we can do, for instance, using signal jamming so that there is no signal in our cells.

The modern technology does exist to do that, but it is very expensive. We are also busy with an integrated security process on a national level to see how we can find the money and ensure that there is better control. The old jammers present a problem because it is not in that specific area of the facility. For instance, if you take the Goodwood facility, if you put the old type of jammers in there, the vehicles on the N1 will also be affected, and, if there is an accident, it will be a problem.

So, we are looking into new technology. Thank you.

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Mr R A P TROLLIP: Deputy Speaker, given the recurring scandals in our correctional facilities and the damning portfolio committee report tabled yesterday, and especially the continued ability of well-resourced inmates to maintain contact through cellphones and the Internet with their criminal networks from behind bars, as you have just confirmed, these breaches point to a systemic failure in existing security protocols. In relation to the recent Constitutional Court ruling and proliferation of cellphones in prisons, has the department not given more serious consideration to the introduction of fixed-network, web-restricted communication devices, along with managed-access systems and mobile-detection technologies, as part of a comprehensive strategy to curb the unauthorised use of technology in our prisons? This has, after all, been effectively abused in our National Assembly before, where signal jammers were used.

Hon Minister, correctional service incarceration is expensive, so it cannot be an excuse to say it is expensive. We heard yesterday how much it costs per day to incarcerate an inmate.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Deputy Speaker, that is exactly why I said that, in addition, the Department of

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Correctional Services information technology services will also ensure, and we will be tasked to ensure, that offenders do not have access to the Internet. That actually includes all these other devices to ensure they comply with that.

I am the first person to admit and say it is a huge problem. Our access to our centres is a problem. Sometimes, you get officials that just switch off the detector, and that is how they get contraband into our facilities. That is why you will see that, since I became Minister, huge amounts of contraband are being confiscated. For instance, more than 40 000 cellphones have been confiscated because we actually ensure that there are more of these raids taking place to ensure we get our facilities clean and to prevent further criminality outside the facilities. Thank you.

Question 506:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, the SA National Defence Force conducts career awareness among the youth and communities through a range of structured and targeted initiatives, aimed at both recruitment and public education about its role and capabilities. The SA National Defence Force,

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SANDF regularly participates in career expos and school outreach programmes, especially during events like the national youth month and Armed Forces Day.

These engagements involve presentations, question and answer sessions and distribution of approaches that outline career opportunities in the army, air force, navy and military health services. During Armed Forces Day celebrations and various shows like Rand Show and Bloemfontein Show, the SANDF showcases its capabilities through military parades, equipment display and live demonstration. For example, simulated the rescue and disaster situations.

The Armed Forces Day also includes career exhibition tents where youth can interact with soldiers and learn about enlistment requirements, military training and professional development. The Military Skills Development System is one of the SANDF's flagship youth development programmes recruiting young people for voluntary service. The SANDF also collaborates with the National Youth Development Agency and other government departments to support youth camps and leadership development programmes.

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The SANDF uses radio, TV and community newspapers to publicise recruitment drives and career awareness campaigns. The Department of Defence and SANDF official social media accounts also share videos, testimonials, and recruitment notices to reach a broader, especially young audience. The SANDF attends municipal outreach programmes, exhibition shows and imbizo forums, where they inform communities about opportunities in the Defence Force and its social contribution.

Defence recruiters do visit local and provincial exhibitions and shows, including universities and further education training colleges. These efforts are part of a broader mandate to improve civil military relations, promote patriotism and ensure that young South Africans from all backgrounds are aware of the SANDF's role and the opportunities it offers. Thank you.

Mr M M HALA: Hon Deputy Minister, what percentage of participants in the Military Skills Development System are ultimately absorbed into the SA National Defence Force? What steps are being taken to improve long term integration outcomes? Thank you.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Hon member, our policy as a department is a 100% intake of Military Skills Development System. This means that all participants who meet the required standards are intended to be absorbed in the regular force. The SANDF remains committed to improving the integration and retention of the Military Skills Development System, MSDS in order to address the gaps within the structures, which are caused by many reasons.

Mr C HATTINGH: Hon Deputy Speaker, my appreciation to the Deputy Minister for once again standing in for the Minister. In view of the critical fiscal constraints highlighted by the Minister in the annual performance plan, and the strategic need to modernise the SANDF, how does the Minister plan to balance youth recruitment and development initiatives such as the Military Skills Development System with the demand for an increased budget allocation just to be able to sustain military capabilities and readiness? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): We are already engaging the National Treasury with a view to recruit as many young people, in order to make sure that the aging Department of Defence and Military Veterans is

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injected with young people. So, we will depend, of course as to whether the National Treasury has got money to assist us.

In the same vein, I would like to suggest that, in order to get quality soldiers who are to operate our artillery air force as well as get involved in cyber-attacks causes and also deal directly with the challenges of artificial intelligence, AI, where the world today is talking about drones.

We may need to engage Department of Basic Education with a view perhaps to design study guides for Mathematics, English, Accounting, and Science, so that when these students finish matric, we can absorb them immediately and send them to every corner of the world to learn more about technology, which unfortunately we cannot avoid not to implement. Thank you.

IsiZulu:

Mnu T I GAMEDE: Ubaba uNtshingila akekho egameni le MK uThulani Gamede ozobuza umbuzo.

English:

In light of the fact that South Africa's youth unemployment rate has skyrocketed to 63,9% which is the highest in the world and

despite that the SA National Defence Force's Military Skills Development System is being promoted as a solution for youth engagements. The programme only accommodates a fraction of 3,4 million unemployed youth nationwide.

How does the Minister justify the limited reach and impact of the Military Skills Development System on impoverished youth from rural areas and townships, while budget allocation for South African National Defence Force continues to prioritise administrative costs and high-ranking salaries over meaningful youth skills development?

IsiZulu:

Baba uHolomisa engathi ubungaphinde uboleke nozakwenu asiphendule ngale ngaphesheya.

English:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): We have already written to the National Treasury with a view to us for money to employ or recruit at least 10 000 recruits. So, let us hope that when the Budget on the 21st is read out, we will be in a position to say, yes, hon so and so

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was correct or was wrong, or at least we have tried. Otherwise, we are on course with that.

IsiZulu:

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU: Sekela Somlomo, Mhlekezi umbuzo wami uzwakala uphuma kancane emgudwini kodwa ekuqonde kukho okokuthi iSouth Afrika inenselelo enkulu yentsha engenanhlonipho noma engalawuleki. UMnyango waMasosha bowukwazi ukuthatha intsha iyiqeqeshe ...

English:

... under the Constitution Campaigns ...

IsiZulu:

... ukuthi ikhule inenhlonipho nokuzazi nokuzazisa phakathi kwezakhamizi ezweni. Ngabe kukhona yini uMnyango okwenzayo ukulekelela ngaleso simo okungekhona ukuthi abantu abaqashwayo bazobangamasosha kodwa kube ukuthi kwakhiwa isizwe kabusha emva kwalezi zinselelo ezikhona ezweni lethu? Ngiyathokoza.

IsiXhosa:

USEKELA MPHATHISWA WEZOKHUSELO NAGQALA OMKHOSI (Mnu B H Holomisa): Lungu elihloniphekileyo, umba odibene ne...

English:

... conscription ...

IsiXhosa:

... ufuna ukuba le Ndlu ibe yiyo ethatha eso sigqibo ...

English:

... whether that conscription should be compulsory or not...

IsiXhosa:

... kwaye iqala kweyiphi iminyaka yobudala iphele kweyiphi.
Ngeli xesha ingekafiki makhe siqale phaya ezikolweni sibuyise
laa nto kwakusithiwa yi...

English:

... Cadet system. Then we can start building patriotism in the
early stages ...

IsiXhosa:

... ukuze sithi thina singenelela siqesha, sibe sifikelela
kubantu abanolwazi nabayaziyo ukuba iflegi yeloMzantsi Afrika
ithetha ukuthini. Abantu abanolwazi lokuba xa uyixhoma iflegi
uyixhoma njani kwaye xa kugqitha ...

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English:

... a hearse or convoy ...

IsiXhosa:

... phambi kwakho ulijoni ulindeleke ukuba wenze ntoni. Ezo zinto ke zisisiseko azikhiwa nje phezulu. Ukuba ningafaka isandla niyiPalamente nisinike imiyalelo, singakwazi ukuyipapasha. Kodwa loo nto ifuna isigqibo seKhabhinethi. Wena ukuba ungafaka into ebhaliweyo thina siza kuxoxa ngayo ukuze sifake ...

English:

... a teaser to the Cabinet that ...

IsiXhosa:

... kukho uluvo olunje. Ukuze iphele le nto yobundlobongela nokungabikho kwesimilo, nazo izinto ekufuneka zenziwe. Enkosi.

Question 540:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Thank you, Deputy Speaker and thanks for the question. The response to the question is as follows, Deputy Speaker, that the ongoing investigations within crime intelligence services their status

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cannot be provided because it is an ongoing investigation. Therefore, the issues of what steps to take will be determined by the outcome of the investigations. For now, we will await that process to be concluded. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr F ADAMS: Deputy Speaker, I am covered. Thank you.

Mr M S MOELA: Minister, what is the progress on vetting senior officials? And, what is the implications of having senior officials operating without security vetting? Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): That is a separate question altogether, Deputy Speaker. However, all senior officers are supposed to be vetted, those that have not yet been vetted will definitely be vetted. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Mr E MTHETHWA: Deputy Speaker, in light of the March 2025 briefing to the Portfolio Committee on Police, which exposed irregular appointments, unauthorised resource use and internal resistance to the reform within the Crime Intelligence Division, what action has the department taken; firstly, to hold senior

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managers accountable for obstructing internal reforms? Secondly, what action has the department taken to address misinformation and internal resistance undermining the division's stability? And, thirdly, what action has been taken to remove ghost employees and reverse irregular human resource decisions? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Deputy Speaker, as I indicated that issues within crime intelligence that are being investigated, we cannot comment on the status of ongoing investigations. However, as the investigations get concluded, that will determine the steps that we need to take against those who would have been engaged in wrong doing. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu. Xandla xa Holobye, ...

English:

I know that you are trying not to answer this.

Xitsonga:

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Hambiswiritano, ndzi kombela mi vulavula, maxaka. Tinyimpi leti humelelaka eka Vunhlorhi bya Vugevenga ti endliwa hi Akhawunti ya Vukorhokeri bya Xihundla kumbe mali leyi tirhiseriwaka swa vukungundzwana. A swi khomeki kahle loko mi nga lavi ku boxa leswaku vanhu lava va lwela yini. Xandla xa Holobye, hi kombela mi hi byela leswaku ...

English:

What are you doing, as the Ministry, to stop the infighting within the Crime Intelligence Division that in the main, they are about the secret service account or the abuse of the Slush Fund Account?

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

Xitsonga:

XANDLA XA HOLOBYE WA MAPHORISA (Tat C Mathale): Ndza khensa xivutiso lexi tatana Gana va nga xi vutisa. Tani hi leswi ndzi nga hlamusela leswaku vulavisisi lebyi nga kona eka xiyenge lexi xa Vunhlorhi bya Vugevenga bya ha ya emahlweni. A byi si gimekiwa. Loko byi gimetiwile, vulavisisi byi ta kombisa eka

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swiboho leswi swi faneleke ku tekiwa. Vulavisisi byi ta hi byela leswaku ku fanele ku endleka yini.

English:

What steps we can take to deal with what would have been revealed by the investigations. The challenges within crime intelligence are challenges that we are dealing with and we are confident that we will be able to resolve the dynamics that are within the division. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Question 532:

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker and thank you, hon member.

Firstly, let me indicate that it's not that nothing has been done on the matter. Indeed, the National Director of Public Prosecutions, NDPP made a submission through the Minister to the President, which necessitated for a request of a full report which took time in terms of submission.

So, there are timeframes that we have provided in terms of how the matter has been dealt with. For example, the report between what the President has requested and what has been provided took more than eight months to the President and as I arrived in the

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portfolio, the final report was submitted in terms of compliance with what the President has requested, which was submitted to the President at the beginning of this year and the matter is at an advanced stage.

As this matter is more of a legal process as well as a labour matter, I do not want to deal with the details in case it jeopardises the process. But I can assure the member that the matter has received adequate attention, and the President is at the final stages of dealing with it.

Mr D D KLOPPER: Minister, it sounds as if the Department of Justice has done very little to nothing to assist the National Prosecuting Authority in ensuring that the President takes the necessary steps to suspend Andrew Chauke, pending the enquiry. Minister, can you give even one example of where your department will assist the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA in ensuring that those implicated in State Capture are prosecuted successfully and swiftly?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: I think the hon Klopper needs to read the National Prosecuting Authority Act to understand the role of the department and that of the

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Minister in prosecutorial matters and how we deal with appointments and suspensions. You seem to have missed the boat there, hon member.

The process of appointment or even doing does not have to involve the Minister. So, the Minister supports and advises the President. The NDPP submits the reports to the President directly through the Minister, but the Minister cannot alter those things. So, it's not up to the Minister nor the department to decide whether or not to support or to submit reports to the President. I think it should be explained in that manner so that we are all on the same page on the processes in terms of section 12(6) of the National Prosecuting Authority Act, because it has an indication of the process.

The second area you are speaking to is a new question regarding the prosecution of State Capture related issues. The Minister nor the President gets involved in decisions of prosecution, so I shouldn't be seen supporting NPA in those processes. The NPA must be able to implement its decisions fairly without fear or favour or prejudice. Thank you very much.

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Ms Z S ABADER: Deputy Speaker, it's the hon Abader speaking. Hon Minister, would you consider spearheading a formal request to the President to suspend the National Director of Public Prosecutions, Advocate Batohi upon the glaring pattern of incompetence highlighted in the Centre for Development and Enterprises, CDE report from the bungle extradition of the Guptas and Bushiri to the collapse of the Omotoso prosecution and a decade long Meyiwa case still going nowhere? How much more damage must be done before accountability is enforced or are we now expected to normalise a fake till you make it culture at the helm of the NPA?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much hon member, I think that this is a new question, Hon Speaker. For example, the hon member speaks about the CDE and didn't say the report. I don't know what the full acronym is in terms of what it is that she is referring to.

In terms of the process around if there is a process that needs to be done around the NDPP, hon member will have to submit a formal request or a formal complaint because I do not have anything that indicates that the NDPP should be taken through a disciplinary committee, DC nor be evaluated.

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I think that's my safe response because I am not sure what she is talking about. If it was written with details, hon Deputy Speaker, perhaps I would be able to comprehensively respond to the matter.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Minister. Hon member, I then propose that you do write to the Minister with a written question.

Mr M N PAULSEN: Minister, in terms of section 12(6)(a) of the National Prosecuting Authority Act, the President is required to act on the advice of the Minister. What concrete actions have you taken to support, initiate or follow through on the NDPP's request? Minister, your continued silence on this matter raises legitimate concerns regarding potential political shielding, particularly given that section 179(4) of the Constitution guarantees prosecutorial independence and the Public Service Act mandates timely disciplinary responses, whilst your department failed to act on such a serious recommendation concerning allegations at one of the highest levels of prosecution.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Paulsen, if you listened to my initial response, the matter in

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terms of what has been submitted was submitted to the President. The President requested more information in terms of the matter which the NDPP had to compile with the NPA and submit to the President.

After such being done, the President then undertook a process. As I am saying, the process is at an advanced stage and therefore the President will make the necessary announcements at the time that he deems that the process has been concluded and I wouldn't want to go into detail of it. I think we should be a little more patient.

In terms of influence and protection, I can assure you, hon member, I have stated publicly that neither would myself nor anyone influence the NPA while I am the political head here. Should that information come through, I am prepared as the Minister to take the necessary action, including opening cases and requesting for prosecution of such individuals. Thank you.

Mr K P SITHOLE: Hon Minister, given the potential implications or public confidence in the National Prosecuting Authority, what interim measures have you considered or implemented to safeguard

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prosecutorial integrity in Gauteng provisions pending the decision of the suspension? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: I think hon Sithole is already going ahead. We do not know whether the President has decided whether to place the NDPP on suspension. So, we can't go there. We must allow the President to consider the documents that are before him, the reports that he has requested for him to process.

We must take note that this is a senior level position the NPA, it is the Deputy Director of Public Prosecution in Gauteng. Yes, in terms of seniority we've got to ensure that there isn't any interference, and I can assure you that the report I have received from the NDPP is that things have been operating smoothly. There has not been concerns around wrongdoing, nor influence.

We do note that the issue of integrity of the office, especially for public prosecution, is important. That's why the matter must be concluded. I agree with members when they raise concerns about the longevity of time that it has taken and we must clear both the issues dealing with the matters to also ensure that the

individual himself can be able to operate without a cloud over their heads, especially with the responsibility that they have.

So, we can assure hon members that this matter will be concluded swiftly and quickly and where measures are needed, we will engage with the NDPP as per her responsibility to ensure that there are no gaps. Thank you very much.

Question 509:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, the department's records indicate that Home Affairs is not ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, if you could perhaps just hold for a minute, there is a point of order from the floor. Hon member, what is your point of order?

Mr S NOMVALO: Deputy Speaker, my hand has long been up and you were not seeing it. I just wanted to correct the Minister. She kept on misleading the House. She has a statutory responsibility in terms of section 33 of the NPA Act to supervise the work of the NPA. She misled the House when she was responding to the question by the DA on the Zondo Commission issues. She must read section 33 thoroughly - of the NPA Act. Thank you.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon member. Hon Dlakude?

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY (Ms D E Dlakude): Deputy Speaker, there are processes to be followed if a member is not satisfied with the responses of any Minister. We suggest that the member follow those processes. Thanks.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Dlakude. Hon members, I'm not going to have a to and fro about this particular point. I will rule on it now. I will just give the hon Trollip an opportunity. His hand was raised.

Mr R A P TROLLIP: Deputy Speaker, when you make a ruling, can you just please tell us whether approximately three years in the making of dealing with the matter is dealing with it swiftly? That's what the Minister said. We are dealing with it swiftly. Is three years swift?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Trollip, that is a matter for your own perception of the matter and a matter of debate and argument. Hon members, in terms of a point of order, it is indeed so that when you raise a point of order, it must be done whilst the speaker is on the floor. My apologies, I apparently did not see

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you. Hon member, allow me to finish. I was busy saying your hand was up, but I didn't see it. Hon member, this is exactly what I'm saying now. Please don't pre-empt what I am going to say. Hon Dlakude is quite correct in the sense that if you are not happy with an answer or if you think that the Minister is not correct, there is a process, please write to the Minister. You may also write to the Speaker to object to the Minister's reply. We will now proceed with the next question. Hon Minister, please proceed.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. In response to this question, the department's records indicate that Home Affairs has not offered any position to a permanent residence holder or to what the hon member refers to as a rare skills visa holder. Thank you.

Ms M MODISE-MPYA: Minister, given that Home Affairs is critical to national security, can you indicate if there are such members and if they are vetted and whether or not do they form part of the cohort that has been nabbed by the counter corruption at Home Affairs dealing with illicit conduct of members in the department? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker and hon member, yes, vetting takes place. It is one of the targets that is contained in the Annual Performance Plan as a matter of course. And that is of course conducted in partnership and through entities like the State Security Agency. Given my original answer that there are no such permanent residence holders or other people referred to in the original question that have been offered these positions, I do think the second part falls away because there are no one. Thank you.

Mr A C ROOS: Minister, you announced on Sunday that permanent residents and others finally are now able to apply for smart IDs. In light of Home Affairs' broader digital transformation objectives, including increased data security and verification standards, what will be the risks and benefits of introducing smart ID cards for South African citizens born abroad, naturalised citizens, and permanent residents?

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, it's a bit difficult. I think that this question is somewhat exhausted. So, this one is quite new, but what I can say is yes, in terms of the security aspects of the question, this is a major step forward for national security because it enables people to

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replace their green ID book with a more secure smart ID. The green ID book is a source of fraud and insecurity for our country and so enabling the technological reforms that have now enabled these categories of people to replace the vulnerable green ID book with a more secure smart ID is indeed a very important step forward for our national security. And I will just use the opportunity to indicate that the first phase of the roll-out is focused on those from visa exempt countries and who already have the green ID. So, as everyone in this Chamber hopefully knows because I hope all members have already transitioned to the smart ID and are no longer carrying the green ID books, you will know that the smart ID involves biometric verification, including fingerprints and facial recognition that is absent from the green ID book and therefore is a major contribution to the security concerns that have been raised. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Adv S SALIE: Hon Minister, can your department verify and advise on the number of foreign nationals from Israel applying for residents and work permits in South Africa and the status thereof. I thank you.

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The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, I think the hon member is most welcome to submit that as a written question and we can peruse the relevant records to indicate. Thank you.

Ms L M NGOBENI: Deputy Speaker, I have heard the response from the Minister, and the Minister is guaranteeing us that there has not been a single permit that has been used in this way. But I want him to just give us assurance that no permit has been granted for a position that a qualified South African could have filled. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Well, Deputy Speaker, since the question relates to whether permanent residents' holders or so-called rare skills visa holders are employed in the Department of Home Affairs, let me repeat that the records indicate no such thing. Thank you very much.

Question 483:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, Obviously, subject to the ongoing budget process, allow me to indicate that the intended budget allocation for the 2025-26 financial year is R23 262,000 as it relates to the matter of deportations, and this compares to. the amount from the previous financial year,

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which was R21 320,000. So, an increase there of just over R2 000,000. Let me also indicate, Deputy Speaker that deportations continue with available funding, while the process around the budget is dealt with. The deportees with financial means also engaging what we call self-deportation in certain cases and I think it is important to just indicate that the number of deportations, annually, has increased from R14 589 in 2020 as well as R39 000,672 in 2023 to R46 000,898 in the previous financial year, this is an 18% increase year on year, and it does mean that South Africa now does more deportations than countries like France and Germany combined. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): The first supplementary question will be asked by hon Muhammad.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Hon Chair, I will be asking the questions for Ms M B Muhammad and I'm seeking your indulgence.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Please proceed, hon member.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Minister, in light of the escalating illegal immigration crisis in South Africa, which has placed immense pressure on local communities, social services and law

enforcement. How does the Minister justify the inadequate budget allocation for deportation in the 2025-26 financial year, particularly, when the Department of Home Affairs reported a backlog of over 34 000 undocumented immigrants awaiting deportation in 2024 alone? Furthermore, can the Minister provide specific details of cost-saving strategies, international partnership or resource allocations that have been pursued to meet deportation targets, especially, in higher risk areas like routing and Western Cape, which has which have seen significant rises in undocumented migrant population? If not, why not? If so, what specific timelines and targets have been established to clear the current backlog and address the bottlenecks in executing lawful deportation?

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, well, let me just start by indicating that the numbers that are quoted there are certainly not in any way similar to what the numbers of deportees being held currently at the Lindella facility. Nonetheless, I think that the numbers speak for themselves, that I've just indicated. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of deportations that are taking place, and that was recently confirmed when we saw the numbers from the previous financial year, over 46 000. This is down to, some extent, to the fact that the Department of

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Home Affairs now has its own buses that are purpose built for this purpose, so that we can speed up the process of transferring people involved in that. It also relates to the intensification of some of the cross departmental campaigns. When you look at the performance, the number of these inspections that have been done over the past few years, there's also a meaningful increase in the last year and these factors are combining to really indicate that we are ramping up our ability to effect deportations.

Of course, deportations are subject to court orders, so, that is another important aspect of the process that needs to be completed. However, I think, Chair, one of the important things we need to indicate is that it's not a one-size-fits-all. We need to, of course, continue our work in the border environment to make sure that it is harder for people to come into South Africa in the first place, and that's where the investments in technology, including the drones that have been recently deployed by the Border Management Authority, BMA, have led to dramatic increases in our ability to prevent people from coming into the country, in the first place. Finally, I think deportation effect more effective border management, as well as the digital reforms we spoke about earlier, enabling us to

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detect people who are in the country illegally. Those are really three core pillars of the work that we are doing and the progress that is being made in this space. Notwithstanding the fact, of course, that there's still a lot to do. Thank you very much.

Ms N E MTOLO: Hon Minister, given the impact of the deportation or on our fiscus, whether are there engagement with the countries of origin of the illegal migrant to take responsibility of the deportation of their citizens? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, that is an important question. The so-called returns agreements are important instruments because they give the country of origin a stake in preventing illegal border crossing. So, in other words, if a country is going to have to share in the costs involved in deportations, they have an incentive from their side to also do more in this space, even as South Africa does more from our side. So, indeed, there are some agreements that have been concluded where this is, in effect, I think Ghana being a recent example. So, that is a principle, indeed, that we are looking to establish and really embed because I think it is in everyone's

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interest. Let me just also say that, when we talk about the impact of the of deportations on the fiscus, I do want to make the point that the impact on our country of not doing deportations would be much, much greater than the figures I quoted to you earlier on. If there are members in this House who are suggesting that we should stop deportations because it is costing some money, then I think that you should just think about what the implications will be for our country's national security if such a message is sent into the world, and therefore, we will continue as Home Affairs to fulfil our mandate and uphold the rule of law. If someone breaks the law, then we have to act on that. Thank you, Chair.

Mr P A VAN STADEN: Minister, if the department does not have the necessary budget allocation for the deportations, can the Minister indicate to this House plans that his department have communicated with National Treasury in order to get more funds to address this problem and the budget allocation needed to successfully deport illegal foreigners from South Africa? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, indeed, this is obviously part of a fluid process where the budget continues to be

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designed as we speak, and so these are discussions that Home Affairs have has participated in including requests made to the Criminal Asset Recovery Account, CARA, fund, and looking at all kinds of ways in which we can bolster this capacity. I also think it's important to indicate to members again that, if we can automate and really use digital transformation to our advantage in some of these spaces, we are going to free up more resources. So, one important example of this is our goal as included in the Medium-Term Development Plan, MTDP, to automate entry and exit at the airports, land ports and seaports. We have a clear target there for mid-term that we want to have automated entry and exit at the airports at that point, and this, essentially, means that there are cameras and potentially the e-Gates that are then linked to the Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA, system, that we are building to automate the visa process.

That will not only improve the efficiency and security of border management because, as I've said before, you cannot bribe a computer, you cannot bribe the camera either. Your face matches or it doesn't, but it will also assist us greatly to then free up human resources and capacity, and overtime, definitely saving us money, which can then be redirected towards things like

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deportation, which is obviously a more human resource intensive exercise. So, it's all about internal reprioritisation that we also must undertake. We can't only push on National Treasury. I think that it's up to departments themselves to use technology as an enabler to free up resources. Thank you, Chair.

Ms L M NGOBENI: Minister, thank you for your responses. Minister, it is clear from horrific incidents like the recent discoveries in Parkmore and Lombardi East were undocumented foreign nationals escaped alleged captivity that we are dealing with highly organised criminal syndicates engaged in human trafficking and exploitation. Minister, can you tell us, are we making any real progress in dismantling these networks and going after the kingpins behind them, or are we simply chasing foot soldiers while the masterminds remain untouched, protected by systemic corruption, weak enforcement and budgetary complexities? Also, can you give us the status of the deportation of Timothy Omotoso. Where are we on that? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, let me indicate, of course, that there was a court ruling recently related to the case of Omotoso, and so, the court had some procedural issues that it identified and that we are currently looking at from the Home

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Affairs perspective. However, there also are indications from the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, around their intention to appeal. So, I think this is one of those cases where close co-ordination will be required. Secondly, yes, I think that the hon member is absolutely correct to indicate the importance of people who lead these kind of trafficking operations and smuggling syndicates, and that's why the focus recently at the borderline has certainly shifted towards dealing with what we call facilitators.

So, over the recent Easter period, the Border Management Authority, BMA, working closely with intelligence and other structures in the in the security cluster, were able to, actually, clamp down and identify and arrest those facilitators because it is when you get to the people who are actually smuggling, you know, victims, or indeed, illegal immigrants across the border line that you make a bigger impact than just dealing with the individual cases. So, yes, indeed, there has been meaningful progress in that space, but I do, certainly, believe that we need much more work also from an intelligence perspective that goes well beyond the capacity or mandate of Home Affairs, to really deal with this issue in our society to really have an intelligence-led focus on dealing with these

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syndicates. We're seeing some progress on this in the border environment through the Border Management Authority, BMA, working with other stakeholders. However, I do think there's certainly much more work to be done here. Thank you, Chair.

Question 465:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon House Chairperson and thanks for the question by the hon Matiase. The nature of the assignment given to the fallen constables and may their souls continue to rest in eternal peace was related to intelligence gathering in areas affected by illegal mining. Constable Linda Cebekhulu and Keamogetswe Buys from the Free State Crime Intelligence were deployed in Limpopo, specifically in the Waterberg District and Capricorn District to gather intelligence on illegal mining activities in support of Operation Vala Umgodi. Constable Cebekhulu and Buys were officially deployed to address illegal mining operations within the Waterberg and Capricorn Districts of the Limpopo province. At the time of their disappearance, both members were returning to their respective deployment areas following authorised rest leave and travelling in a private-owned vehicle.

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Constable Boipelo Senoge was attached to Park Road Police Station in Mangaung. She was also travelling to Limpopo during her rest period and was a passenger in the same vehicle as Constable Cebekhulu and Constable Buys. Thank you, hon House Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members, we have been informed that hon Ntlangwini will take charge of the question in terms of the rules. The hon Ntlangwini.

Mrs E N NTLANGWINI: Hon Deputy Minister, in light of the suspicious and tragic death of the three SA Police Service, SAPS, officers deployed under Operation Vala Umgodi who were reportedly involved in investigating illegal mining. Can you confirm who was the person responsible for their deployment, were the person properly vetted, whether the individuals prior to their deployment, were they questioned as well these ones that knows about the individuals where they were deployed and furthermore, Minister, were these SAPS officials in possession with them with dockets were the dockets in that vehicles of the politically connected individuals and did the SAPS close this matter and do you have the tracking companies, details of the vehicle that they were tracking in and each and every device at

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which stage can we locate each and every device of these three SAPS officials?

We say to the families, may their souls rest in peace and those that have murdered them may they see the gates of hell and justice. I thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon House Chairperson, thanks for the follow up question. I can confirm that, yes, the officers were involved in an accident at the Hennops River. The investigation around the vehicle has not been concluded. They are ongoing. As far as we are concerned, up to now it has been an accident. If there is any other matter associated with their death, I think the further investigations will bring that to light, but it is an accident as we speak. If you recall the day that this happened, it was raining, and we are convinced that indeed that played a role in that regard. Thank you, House Chairperson.

Mr I CAMERON: Hon House Chairperson and hon Deputy Minister, given the increasing deployment of SAPS members to high risk illegal mining operations under initiatives like Operation Vala Umgodì, what form national policy or standard operating

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procedures govern the officer's safety, demand, oversight and rapid response in these deployments and will the Minister table this policy for Parliament to scrutinise? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon House Chairperson, thanks for the follow up question. Yes, the Operation Vala Umgodi is handled from national office and the national commissioner is generally responsible for the overall command and all necessary steps are taken to ensure that those who are involved in these operations their safety is taken as a priority measure. Any other further information that is needed can be made available, hon House Chairperson, thank you.

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU: Hon House Chairperson, a few days back or a few days ago, we lost three constables with regards to or linked to this Operation Vala Umgodi issue. But what I am coming in with hon House Chairperson is that: In view of the incident that has happened after that of the police, where in Mpumalanga province we have lost an activist who was organising the communities to sort of work with the Police in order to expose these illegal mining activities in the province, who has lost his life, he was shot and killed as an activist of fighting against this illegal mining. What is your department doing Sir,

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in order to assist the families of the deceased who died trying to assist the Police force in exposing these illegal mining activities? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Hon House Chairperson thanks for the follow up question. I think with regard to excuse me, the specifics of the case that the hon member is raising, I cannot give details because I do not have. But we are concerned about the safety of everybody, including community members who give us information related to any criminal activity. Thanks very much, hon House Chairperson.

Ms C T NONTENJA: Hon House Chairperson and hon Minister, many SA Police Service officers have been dying in this country due to a combination of factors such as accidents, assaults and shootouts. As a result, between January and March 2025, more than 20 police officers were killed whilst of and on duty. Given the danger of police work, has the department considered to advance and innovate more police safety tools and strategies to protect the men and women in blue? Why is the roll-out of body worn cameras that you promised have been so slow? Don't you think those body worn cameras could have come in handy to expedite the current investigation of the deceased constables?

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C Mathale): Hon House Chairperson, thanks for the question. The issue of the safety of police officers is a priority for SAPS. That is why in their training programmes the issue of survival and how to deal with situations that can arise in the course of their work because SAPS you will agree with me the work that they do is a work that involves a lot of risks. Officers leave their homes to go to work, expecting to come back, but at the same time it is possible that they might not return back home safely. So, because of this, extensive training is done to them so that at all material times they are able to respond to situations that might arise without being fully warned about it in order to deal with that. The issue of equipment that they use or they are supposed to use like body worn cameras, we have taken a decision that this must be implemented and of course there have been delays, but these are delays that we are dealing with as the leadership of the institution. Thanks, hon House Chairperson.

Question 512:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Chair, a preliminary analysis of the considerable volume of information that was generated at the National Policing Summit conducted from 9 to 11 April 2025 has been undertaken. However, it should

be noted that the detailed analysis and cross-referencing of information is still in process and is scheduled to be completed by the 31st of May 2025. This detailed analysis and cross-referencing will enable the unpacking of high-level challenges and mitigation measures, and the identification of specific challenges and equally specific measures to address these challenges, which may involve the utilisation of the SAPS' resources and expertise or that of organisations external to the SAPS through engagements and partnerships.

The SA Police Service has identified the following broad categories of key challenges and approaches that will be used in formulating specific and direct mitigation measures, and/or responses to these challenges, which will be implemented over the short and medium-term process.

One, the strategic challenge, which has been identified, which affects the performance of the department and its ability to effectively address the objects of policing as per section 205 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, which will be addressed predominantly over the medium term, inter alia, by means of the following approaches, which are outlined as leadership accountability, investment in improving

the morale of the SAPS' members, intergovernmental collaboration, spatial and environmental design, police station structural configuration, resources to budget and the demand alignment ... integrated planning mechanisms.

These are the other challenges in terms of policing, particularly in respect of the SAPS' adaptability and responsiveness to crime threats and its visibility – by strengthening, inter alia, visible policing, crime investigation and improving general police capacity.

The third one is community and stakeholder involvement, which will relate to collaborative efforts to strengthen the community policing model through the following measures, including, inter alia, the identification of specific areas of policing, encouraging increased involvement of reservists, youth, spiritual leaders and neighbourhood watches, community policing forums and community safety patrols.

Policing performance management-related challenges is the fourth area that has been addressed, which will be addressed by, inter alia, adopting a more integrated approach to planning, monitoring and evaluation, the co-ordination of the raw

assurance efforts of various assurance providers, including oversight bodies such as Parliament, the enhancing of partnerships with identified external organisations, and the focus on the value that is derived from police operations and deployments, particularly from a community-based perspective.

The modernisation challenges which will be addressed by, inter alia, digitalisation, enhancing data and predictive analytics, and modernising and digitising the SAPS' operational and support related processes. [Time expired.]

Mr E A CLOETE: Hon Deputy Minister, from the policing summit, what are the new interventions and strategies that will deal with gender-based violence, GBV, and farm murders?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): As I indicated, collaboration with other stakeholders will assist us in dealing with GBV and farm murders.

In this regard, the strengthening of our rural policing strategy will greatly assist us in our collaboration with organised labour ... organised farmers through their infrastructure, for

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their cameras that they have and the facilities that they have established to protect their own farms.

As we integrate the two – what they do and what we will be doing – it will be easy for us to improve our policing in rural communities.

In terms of GBV, we will be able to defeat this as we work with communities at large. Also ... reorientation of the South African community, for them to understand that women must be treated with respect because how we are socialised plays a great role in how we relate to people at an older age. Thank you, Chairperson.

THE CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr M Manyi): Chair ... just to congratulate the Deputy Minister on pre-empting the question so well, that he ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Manyi, that is not a point of order. Let's say you've abused the platform for a point of intervention. The second opportunity goes to the hon Schickerling.

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Ms L SCHICKERLING: House Chair, I agree with hon Manyi. Deputy Minister, while the Policing Summit outlined several key interventions to improve policing efficiency, what targeted strategies are being implemented to address, not only GBV specifically, but violence against children in our country, which is massively prevalent at the moment? There was an apparent lack of focus on this issue during the summit.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Can she repeat that part? I didn't get it very well. I'm sorry, hon Schickerling.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Schickerling, the substantive part ... Maybe just the area that didn't receive attention.

Ms L SCHICKERLING: No problem. Deputy Minister, the summit highlighted a lot of issues in the SAPS and how we are going to improve policing efficiency. However, there's an apparent lack of ... the implementation didn't address GBV which ... as hon Manyi said, but specifically violence against children, which is very prevalent in our country at this stage. How are you going to address this?

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Chair, yes, the issue of violence against children is a concern, but that is a reflection of us as a society in terms of the manner in which violence has become so dominant in society. It needs the entirety of society for us to relook at how we interface and relate to each other.

Of course, this violence is not a phenomenon that just came from nowhere due to the democratic dispensation. We have a past history. The history of colonialism and the history of apartheid was a history of violence and this violence has come to grip society as a whole. People believe that to resolve whatever challenge or any difference that they have amongst themselves, they must respond in a violent manner. It is particularly the people who become victims who are vulnerable, children in particular. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr G TAAIBOSCH: Hon Deputy Minister, interventions on paper really have no significance unless you implement them. How and how soon do you intend to filter down these key interventions to the ground where policemen and policewomen on their daily beat have to dodge flying bullets?

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Yes, indeed, we have observed that, with regard to the issue of violent crime in the country, the SAPS alone will not be able to succeed in this. That's why we evolved an integrated violent crime prevention strategy, which was then adopted by the national Cabinet.

Currently, we are involved in a process through the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service, together with the SAPS' management, to unfold this policy in provinces, in districts, in local municipalities and ultimately at ward level, because crime takes place at a ward level, and if you don't engage communities in this regard, you will not win this fight.

Given the progress that we have made in the unfolding of this strategy, we are confident that we will ultimately be able to reach every ward in the country and ensure that our people are part of this process in the fight against violent crime within our communities. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu. Xandla xa Holobye.

English:

One of the things that you wanted to achieve is in terms of how to reduce violent crime, but there's a problem in terms of the detection rate, especially for murder.

Xitsonga:

Milandzu ya vanhu lava va dlayaka kumbe lava va dlayiwaka yi teka nkarhi wo leha ku va yi lavisisiwa.

English:

You've spoken about the issue of morale. I wanted to check, Deputy Minister, at the moment whilst waiting for the analysis of the summit, what is being done to improve the morale of detectives and the detective service so that the murders that are happening can be solved quickly? Thank you very much.

Xitsonga:

Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

English:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF POLICE (Mr C C Mathale): Chairperson, before the summit, we had a workshop focusing specifically on the wellness of police officers, and we had professional bodies that assisted us in that regard because we are of the firm view

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that the wellbeing of our officers is very important. If our officers are not in a good space mentally, they will not be able to perform to their full potential. We believe that that workshop has gone a long way in contributing towards the orientation of our officers.

However, we are also aware that the workshop on its own is not going to solve the problem that you have mentioned in terms of dockets that take time to be concluded and investigations that don't get concluded as a result of the shortage of detectives.

One thing that is a reality is that, as far as the detectives are concerned and policing in general, we as a country have not been recruiting for quite some time. For the past three years, we have been lucky, Gen Holomisa, that the President and the Minister of Finance has allowed us to recruit 10 000 police officers, which gave us 30 000 police officers over a period of three years. This was the first of its kind. This number was intended to capacitate the numbers that we have.

Of these numbers, we have allocated 4 000 to the detective division. We are aware that this number is not going to resolve the problems that are there. You find one officer having over

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300 dockets. You can't expect one detective to carry such a workload in terms of dockets and we are ... [Time expired.]

Question 522:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Chairperson, the total to date for Project Thusano up to the 2024-25 financial year amounts to R3 40 777 922. The project demonstrates significant cost savings when compared to the local industry regarding measurable strategic, operational and or socioeconomic benefits. It must be noted that before Project Thusano, the serviceability of our prime mission equipment was at its lowest. The service providers, that is a local industry was charging exorbitant fees and were not doing what was expected of them to repair and maintain our vehicles. Instead, there were a lot of returns of vehicles after they were repaired by the local industry, thus this caused our prime mission equipment to be beyond economic repair and had to be placed for disposal as per our policy. Meanwhile, there were no prospects of replacement due to budget cuts. Project Thusano resuscitated our equipment to the extent that the SANDF is in a state where it can deploy its landward forces and be ready to fulfil its mandate whenever called upon to serve. The project has resuscitated our technical service core and trained a lot of

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members in Cuba a total of 444 members trained and 649 members through skills transfer who are now deployed in various technical centres across our country.

The SA Army has seconded 41 technicians to Denel to further in service training and collaboration. In terms of the strategic benefits of collaboration and the project, members trained, and the skills acquired through the programmes will tremendously benefit our country and the SANDF in future. The seed planted through the programme cannot be quantified now but will only manifest in the future. As the SANDF reaches its vision of self-sustainability through its capacity development project, the intent of the SANDF is to further collaborate with the local industry, different universities and TVET colleges in the capacity building, not only of our members, but the youth at large to venture into engineering and technical disciplines that will help our country to train and develop our youth. Thank you.

Mr C HATTINGH: Hon Speaker, I'm not sure whether the Deputy Minister believe everything that he has said, but I'll leave it there. Hon Deputy Speaker, in light of the ongoing concerns regarding the lack of skills transfer from the Cuban project, that is Thusano and Kgala, what is the department's plan to

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address these deficiencies, particularly with regard to the impact on the local defence industry? They are very able and capable, but they are neglected. And also in the South African workforce, we have seen the new devastating unemployment figures yesterday. Furthermore, what measures are being taken to ensure that future defence partnerships align more closely with the development of local skills and the reduction of unemployment, particularly in the arms industry and related sectors? I thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Right now, the Department of Defence, in consultation with the local institutions, the aim is to make sure that we move away from the accusations that the people who were trained in Cuba cannot be accredited in our local institutions. So, that engagement is continuing and we have already had agreements that at least their five years or their last year in their training should be completed in South Africa. So, as far as you say what I said, I don't understand. Well, if you think that you are a wise person, then you can tell me what I should do. Thank you.

Ms T SOKANYILE: House Chairperson, and Hon Deputy Minister, what specific lessons have been learned from Operation Thusano and

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how does the department plan to incorporate these insights to ensure more effective and sustainable outcomes going forward?
Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): I think, hon member, I've already answered your question when I said there were concerns here in South Africa that the quality of training received by SANDF members is questionable and some of these courses are not accredited to our institutions. Hence, we took a decision to engage the local institutions, and I am satisfied that even the recent trip by the Cuban ministers to South Africa, we emphasised that there is no way that we cannot collaborate with our local institutions. So, if you talk about the doctors, you talk about engineers. They have to partner with the local institution to make sure that we produce a quality product at the end of the day.

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU: House Chairperson, once more, hon Deputy Minister, what percentage of this R3 billion expenditure has been allocated directly to South African service providers, military personnel training and local industry development as opposed to payments made to foreign governments or contractors?
Thank you.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): To be fair to you, hon member, I would appreciate if you can forward that question so that I can give you full details and a breakdown of how much is benefiting local industry and how much is going outside the country. If I start answering you now, I will be misleading this House.

Ms M L MATHOPA: Given the concerns about the lack of skills transfer to SANDF personnel under Operation Thusano programme Kgala and considering the escalating unemployment in South Africa's arms industry, why has the Department of Defence not actively incorporated qualified military veterans, particularly those who served in the South African Cape Corps SACC, and possesses the necessary technical expertise into the programme to enhance skills development, reduce costs and address veteran unemployment? Furthermore, what measures will be taken to ensure that such veterans are utilised effectively to bridge the skills gap rather than relying excessively on foreign contractors, thereby retaining critical defence knowledge within the SANDF? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): I take your input as an advice which we must follow,

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and I can assure you that I will report this to the hon Minister and her commanders with a view to fulfil your suggestion. But those Military Veterans, we will have to screen them as well as to whether they qualify as engineers. So, but we must take your positive contribution very well. Thank you.

Question 515:

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon House Chair, firstly, I want to say that there are a total of 12 037 remand detainees, who are foreign nationals, incarcerated for the contravention of the Immigration Act. And I have a breakdown per region, which I will submit.

Currently, there are no bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries due to the fact that South Africa does not have an enabling domestic legislation to regulate and facilitate the transfer of sentenced foreign offenders, including South Africans incarcerated in foreign countries, to serve their sentences in the countries of origin.

It should be borne in mind that the implementation of the Immigration Act in relation to deportation of those who are not entitled to stay in the country, falls within the scope of the

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Department of Home Affairs and not Correctional Services. The Department of Correctional Services is responsible for identifying foreign nationals in their detention facilities and reporting such individuals to the Department of Home Affairs.

The Department of Home Affairs then establishes the nationality of such offenders and initiates the deportation of those who stay in the Republic of South Africa illegally. I thank you.

Mr M M SOKOPO: Minister, considering what you have just responded, just a follow-up to check; did you attempt to engage your fellow executive members that are in the security cluster to see if can't you have in the country a way of dealing with focusing on legislation and other things to enable us to minimise this issue of overcrowding, before you even go to Southern African Development Community, SADC? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: The good news, hon member, is yes, and there is quite a lot of progress. We already started last year. At present, at the Justice, Crime, Prevention and Security, JCPS, cluster, which involves the Department of Justice, the Police and Home Affairs, although not part of the JCPS that there is a process to amend the Criminal Procedure Act

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and part of that will also be to amend the legislation in such a way that we have legislation that will make it possible for deportation of these illegals back to their countries of origin. Thank you.

Ms B K DIALE: Minister, given the complexities involved in securing agreements with the Southern African Development Communities, SADC, member states and other foreign countries to repatriate their sentenced nationals, to serve their sentences in their countries of origin. What additional measures is the department undertaking to address and alleviate overcrowding across South Africa's correctional Services? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon House Chair, as I have mentioned, no, we have no agreement with SADC countries. What is important, is that we must understand that at present that the Department of Correctional Services, DCS, is responsible for the detention of all arrested persons, including foreign nationals, according to the warrant of detention issued by courts.

Now, a couple of weeks ago the hon President visited our neighbouring country of Lesotho, the National Commissioner of

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Correctional Services attended there, and we are in a process already engaging. There is a willingness from Lesotho to see where we then can exchange and deport our can I say from our side their foreign citizens and from their side back to South Africa, of South African citizens.

There has also been a conference in Namibia and the same situation occurred there. So, the good news is that we are in a process, and I would like to see that we take all steps possible to enhance that. But again, it is important to note that both countries who are involved, and South Africa must have enabling legislation to do so. At this stage we lack that legislation and that's why I said we are in the process of seeing how we can amend legislation. Thank you.

Ms M L MATHOPA: House Chair, on behalf of Marlon Daniels. Hon Minister, with a strain on correctional facilities due to overcrowding, particularly with the large proportion of remand detainees who are foreign nationals in contravention of the Immigration Act 13 of 2002, may I ask: Given the urgency of alleviating overcrowding, what short-term measures is the department considering addressing this issue while diplomatic engagements are underway? I thank you, House Chair.

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The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon House Chair, unfortunately, I must say to the hon member that there are no fixers. You have other departments involved in this whole process, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, you also have, for instance, the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Justice and I said we already embarked last year on a process so that we can sort of communicate to see how we can address.

The real problem of overcrowding is as follows, to just give a perspective: At present we have about 108 000 beds in our facilities. The inmates sentenced in our Correctional Services are about 104 000 members or inmates. So, there are enough beds for the sentenced inmates in our facilities.

Our problem comes with the remand detainees, not only the foreign remand detainees, but all remand detainees and then we talk about almost 61 000, remand detainees. We have people who are waiting still more than 10 years, and they still did not have the opportunity to finalise the whole justice process, in terms of the fact that they have to appear in court.

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So, we do have conversations with the Department of Justice, we are looking at the matter and of course the solution will be that we also have remand detainees who couldn't afford a bail of around about R100. There are 1227 who couldn't afford a bail of less than R1000. We also see how we can solve that problem. There are processes in progress. Thank you.

Ms K KGOBISA-NGCABA: Minister, things in your department are always moving, never arriving. It's always in progress it is never concluded. Yesterday, you took us through the parole review process that has been going since 2015. Is this another issue that is going to be perpetually going but not sure where. Now that you say you have discussed this in your cluster, are the timelines the legislation that you need when it will be tabled, do you have a firm timelines? You can guarantee us that we will see action or will the conclusion of this also be in the 9th Administration?

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon House Chair, I also said yesterday in the portfolio committee that I also have the question why, since 2015 we are still talking about 10 years, and we couldn't come to a final on the revising of our parole system. And I said in a lighter note, I don't hope that it will

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take another 10 years. And I said, I would like to see that in the next two years, we finalize this matter.

And I said to the hon member who asked the question, I cannot commit to say at that specific time because you have other departments who are also involved, like the Department of Justice, who have their own, can I say matters to attend to. So, yes, in the end, at the JCPS cluster there are not solid cut off dates in terms of the timeframes. I wish I could have had that, but unfortunately, to give an honest answer at this moment we don't have it, but in the end and it also said on the revised parole system that at the next meeting I hope, as far as that is concerned, that I will give a timeframe, but it will not have a final, can I say committed and if I say committed, meaning if we go over that, then heads must roll. We must try to ensure that we speed up the process to solve the problem as quickly as possible. I thank you

Question 544:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members, the time allocated to this cluster today has now expired. We will now take the Questions that were transferred for oral reply.

Question 544 has been asked by the hon Hattingh to the Minister

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of Defence and Military Veterans. The question is, whether, with reference to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence convening in December 2024 and the letter, dated 24 December 2024, wherein the President of the Republic, Mr M C Ramaphosa, informed the National Assembly Speaker, Mrs A T Didiza and the National Council of Provinces Chairperson, Ms R Mtshweni-Tsipane that he had extended the deployment of the SA National Defence Force to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC, she advised the President with regard to his specified decision; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so what are the relevant details?

IsiXhosa:

USEKELA MPHATHISWA WEZOKHUSELEKO NAMAGQALA OMKHOSI (Mnu. B H Holomisa): Ooh, nguTata uHatting lo. Uyahlupha kakhulu, futhi lo tata.

English:

To provide a detailed and accurate response to this parliamentary question, it would be appreciated if the Department of Defence and Military Veterans would be furnished with more details with regards to the said employees specifically kindly provide the following -

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Deputy Minister, I do not know whether you are answering the question I referred to. Maybe, just consult your file a bit further.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): What is the number of the question?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Deputy Minister, it is Question 544 about further extension to the deployment of our forces to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and whether the Minister advised the -

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): My apologies, Mr Hattingh, apologies and your team. In accordance with the constitutional and legislative framework governing the employment of the SA National Defence Force, particularly section 201 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Minister, as the political head of the department provides strategic guidance and advise the President who is the Commander-in-Chief of the SA National Defence Force on all matters related to defence deployments. The advice to extend the deployment was informed by several key considerations including the continuing regional security obligations under the

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Southern African Development Community, SADC, mandate. The situation on the ground in the Eastern DRC and the need to contribute to regional peace and stability.

The advice was also aligned with assessment received from the defence force and relevant stakeholders based on SADC pledges and deliberation. Following this process and in compliance with the law, the President communicated the extension of the deployment to the Speaker of the NA and the Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces on 24 December 2024. Thank you.

Mr C HATTINGH: Hon Chair, the hindsight is a very exact science. Now, with the outcome that we have seen in the DRC, if we go to the mandate, the mandate was to assist the FADRC in neutralising the M23 and other, "negative forces". Instead, our forces in the bill of the SA National Defence Forces were neutralised due to the lack of support, air support and logistical support. Now, with hindsight, and looking at future similar missions, would the Minister have advised the President differently and in future will the Minister advise the President not to continue with the deployment on a so-called peacekeeping mission in these circumstances? Thank you.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Good question. But I would advise you on the process of sending troops abroad for peacekeeping mission. You must do what I would call a reconnoitre of the area you have to operate in. Secondly, you submit a comprehensive plan as to how are you going to achieve your mission. In this case you are not going to have that answer until the Department of Defence and Military Veterans has embarked on or has appointed a board of inquiry to respond exactly to your questions. In other words, after the President and Parliament have agreed to deploy. Did the commanders of the SANDF assess the orders? Were they satisfied? If they were not satisfied, did they go back to the president and say to achieve this mission, we need financial support of this nature or a military backup of this nature of this size?

You will only know that when an inquiry has been done. This could either be a board of inquiry or a judicial commission of inquiry, as I have heard some of you in Parliament are calling for an inquiry. So, I cannot give you an outright answer on that except to say there is a need for this country to prioritize our engagements outside the country. If we go there, we go to do what? What is our national interest? And if we are unable to answer that question, Parliament then should debate that when

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the President, in future, asks for us to do a peacekeeping mission.

Mr C G NIEHAUS: Hon House Chair, a good answer which I must thank you for. House Chair and hon Deputy Minister let me especially thank you because it is in line with the answer that you gave this morning in the Standing Committee when you said it will be a great idea, and no sane person will not support a commission of inquiry. I sincerely hope, Deputy Minister, that you will convince your Minister accordingly and the President because Deputy Minister the President decided to inform the Joint Standing Committee about this deployment on 24 December 2024 while the decision was taken on 16 December. Therefore, the President missed the deadline and the deployment in terms of the law and the Constitution was actually illegal. I want to ask you, Deputy Minister, to bring that to the attention of the President because he must respond to it. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you. Hon Deputy Minister, I do not know whether you have a response.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Hon Carl Niehaus, the Minutes of this House during

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the debate, I think few months ago will be provided to the Minister and the President to advise on this call by the Members of Parliament who say there should be an inquiry? But we have an obligation as a Department of Defence and Military Veterans that after such incidents, we have no choice but to appoint a board of inquiry. It might be boards of inquiries. For instance, about 14 soldiers have died. We had to do an inquiry quickly so that their families are aware and then the insurance companies would not give them problems. So, there will be other boards of inquiry which will look at the tactical side of things, the deployments and so on. But yes, hon member, we will convey your message loud and clear to the Minister.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

English:

I will ask the question on behalf of hon Zibi.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Continue, please, the other Zibi, hon Gana.

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Mr S M GANA: Also, I will take the other Zibis in the Question Paper. Just to ask Deputy Minister, understanding that the troops that have to return will be the ones who were deployed under Southern African Development Community Mission to DRC, SAMIDRC and the ones under the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUSCO, are still remaining in the in the DRC. When can we expect the first troops that were part of the same DRC to be back in the country understanding that they are currently in Tanzania. And is there a thought around those that are part of the MONUSCO mission on how long they stay in their mission? Thank you very much, Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): The leadership of the Department of Defence and Military Veterans will take the cue from this House. The day you say the SANDF members who are under the UN hospices, then we will implement that decision of Parliament. For now, those troops will continue to operate under the UN, until we are advised otherwise. Remember also that, we are members of the United Nations and we agreed to support the peacekeeping initiatives in the continent. Until such time that we are advised otherwise, we can say right now there is no plan to

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withdraw the troops who are under United Nations in the DRC. The only troops which are affected were those who were deployed under SADC mission. Thank you.

Ms M RWEQANA: Hon House Chair, Minister with the SANDF readiness in crisis, over 52% of equipment unserviceable and domestic security deteriorating, how do you justify committing troops and millions of Rands to the DRC without first presenting the cost benefit analysis or a strategic threat assessment to Parliament. Is this not a case of ignoring South Africa's own urgent defence needs to serve foreign interests while communities of South Africa here in South Africa remain unprotected and borders porous.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Hon House Chairperson, I would respond as follows. What you have just said makes sense that what are our priorities? Given that now we have an escalating crime, escalating almost in every corner in the country. Why can't we do an assessment? Perhaps this could be a justification to even recall those who are under the UN to say we have our own internal problems. We need a break of about 18 months, retrain those troops, reintegrate them to our society again and make

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sure that we have a strong defence force to protect the interests of South Africa first. And, when we deploy in future, I wish that we can ask the UN or AU that how much are you going to give to us in terms of our equipment because it has been proven that had the SANDF has been exhausted in terms of funding. So, we must review the whole setup. Let us not behave as if we are a certain Father Christmas and be good everywhere. So, we need to train, retrain our defence force, re-equip them and then we are clear about the mission given to us, outside the country.

Question 548:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Can you repeat the question, there was a lot of noise around here.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Question 548, Deputy Minister, it is about the irregular appointment of an unqualified intern to a senior position and the Public Protector's investigation and report into the matter.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): In accordance with the constitutional and legislative

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framework to provide a comprehensive and accurate response to the parliamentary question, it would be appreciated if the Department of Defence and Military Veterans could be provided with additional details regarding the said employees.

Specifically, kindly provide the following: the name of the intern in question and the job title of the post. Once the required details are provided, the Department of Defence and Military Veterans will be in a better position to provide a full and precise response to the parliamentary question.

It must, however, be noted that in terms of the Public Service Act of 1994 and the Public Service Regulations, the Department of Defence and Military Veterans cannot appoint an intern in a senior position. Thank you

Mr C HATTINGH: I would like to thank the Deputy Minister for that response. I have got no follow-up on that. Thank you. I will provide the information.

Mr C G NIEHAUS: Yes, thank you, House Chair. House Chair, the problem of patronage and the appointment of unqualified staff based on favours to friends and family very seriously affects the Department of Defence and Military Veterans. Therefore, the

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issue at hand is one that needs to be considered in the general context of what happens in the Department of Defence and Military Veterans. Can the hon Deputy Minister enlighten this honourable House on what overall policy has been put in place to address this issue and to prevent such further appointments, if no such overarching policy is in place; why not, Deputy Minister? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Hon member, we will investigate this as I have said. However, overall, if you look at the Department of Defence and Military Veterans is clear that some of the people who are occupying certain positions do not qualify or meet the requirements. This goes to question, what kind of training did we expose our military personnel into? However, Carl, I cannot give you details on that, but in the portfolio committee ... [Interjections.] ... sorry, hon Carl Niehaus, but in the portfolio committee I am sure that we will give you all the details, sir. I must consult the human resource, HR, on what the parliamentary members are saying. I cannot do a thumb sucking on that. I hope that I have answered you.

Xitsonga:

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Tat S M GANA: Mutshamaxitulu wa Yindlu ...

English:

... through you to Deputy Minister, since your appointment as the Deputy Minister to this department, have you had instances where soldiers or troops or employees approach you to complain about the way promotions happen within the department and how have you handled those complaints if you have received them since your appointment as the Deputy Minister?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): The complaints have not started only when I was appointed as a Deputy Minister. You must remember that I was part of the Defence Service Commission which investigated the conditions of the Defence Force personnel. Immediately after some of them surrounded Union Building, President Zuma asked the then Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Lindiwe Sisulu, to ask me to be part of a team to investigate these problems. We visited almost all these units.

The issue of promotion was higher up the complaints about promotion. Some would say that we are not being promoted because we are not belonging to a certain category. Some would say that

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those who were in the homelands, those who were in the Apla, those who were in the Azanian National Liberation Army, Azanla, they do not feature into the structure. That process has not been addressed adequately. Therefore, when I was appointed as Deputy Minister, yes, there were complaints about the promotions.

However, what we need to do is to summon the Defence Service Commission and say to them, according to your findings, as you have been doing your work visiting bases, which items have been implemented? Then you will be able to know that the problem is deep. Yes, the answer is yes.

Mr T I GAMEDE: Is it possible that we give a round of applause after what he has said about it ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): You don't need my permission to applaud in this House. The last supplementary question may be asked by the hon Ntshingila.

Mr S P MKHIZE: Hon House Chairperson, I am not hon Ntshingila, I'm Siyabonga Mkhize. I will ask the question on behalf of hon Ntshingila. Has the department considered establishing a

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people's defence accountability office to oversee recruitment and ensure that merit-based appointments are prioritised over political influence; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details and timeframes for implementation? Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Deputy Minister, it is the last follow-up question. Deputy Minister, you have our sympathies, you've done more than your share today. Hon member, will you just quickly repeat your question?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Can you repeat your question?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members, let's allow this member to be audible for the Deputy Minister.

Mr S P MKHIZE: Has your department considered establishing a people's defence accountability office to oversee recruitment and ensure that merit-based appointments are prioritised over political influence; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details and timeframes for implementation? Thank you.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): The answer is a big no. We have not yet discussed such an approach. What ... [Interjections.] ... No, listen, listen, don't get too excited. The Department of Defence and Military Veterans and HR department has got a policy where they visit various provinces and use *Government Gazette* and radio stations to say that those who are interested to join the Defence Force, they are welcome, and they must apply. We have done that.

However, if there is a view as you are explaining it or suggesting, talk to the member of the portfolio committee who represent your party, who is in the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans or Joint Standing Committee to table that so that we can discuss it - what does it mean. It might well be that you feel that the recruitment of our troops is concentrated only in one area and the people in the outlying areas are not. Therefore, bring it back so that we can investigate it. I'm not disgusted by it at all. Thank you.

Question 550:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): House Chairperson, once the withdrawal process from

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the area of operation is completed, the executive expects there will be a thorough briefing on the entire operation. Following this debrief, the Ministry, together with the commander of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF, will provide direction on the terms of reference for the entire board of inquiry.

With regard to the possibility of a judicial commission of inquiry, the Ministry will also consider and advise the nation on this matter at an appropriate time. It is worth noting that Parliament has expressed a keen interest in ensuring that a thorough and transparent investigation is conducted. The Ministry recognises this concern and will engage accordingly on the potential establishment of such a commission. In terms of timelines, the boards of enquiries, once completed, are subjected to due processes which would include the legal office as well as the commander. Therefore, the timelines of completion of the board of inquiries will be confirmed. Thank you.

Mr C HATTINGH: Thank you, hon Deputy Minister, as well as this morning in the portfolio committee, a part of the question was responded to by a former general and the other part by a member of the executive who recently jumped the fence to the oversight side.

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Hon Deputy Minister, I would like to ask a question. In view of the media conference, which was held by the same people who, according to your response, must decide on the way forward as far as the board of inquiry is concerned, we have said in the media statement that the deployment was a success. Everybody else says it is a massive failure.

Those people who say the deployment was a success must now decide on a board of inquiry. Is that not a serious conflict of interest, failing to recognise that 14 of our soldiers were killed and 174 were injured, some seriously injured, maimed for the rest of their lives? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): Hon Hattingh, the success or not of the SADC Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo, SAMIDRC, deployment cannot be measured only by one incident. We need a comprehensive report from the Southern African Development Community, SADC, the United Nations, UN, the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, government and the SANDF.

So, it's not going to be in the interest of this country to give a judgment. Safe to say that the Minister and the commander of

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the defence force have been involved in this operation, and we cannot, therefore, question them when they say the operation was a success or not a success. Rather, let's stick to what Parliament asked us to do: investigate this matter.

Out of the findings of such an inquiry, we can then give judgment to say, this was a failure, or this was not a failure. Remember, the mission of the SADC was to protect the people of the DRC. When they were deployed there, questions will be asked: did you succeed on that score? We are going to ask the UN, out of the casualties we have, we have confirmed them publicly, but on your side, how many people were involved in that incident during that month, and how many casualties did the other side get? So, it's not going to be easy. So, remember, just cool down about giving judgments. Thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr N M PAULSEN: Thank you, Chairperson, Minister, in addition to the 14 SANDF soldiers who were killed in the DRC, camps were overrun at Sake and Goma, and reports of SANDF personnel taken hostage by M23 rebels. Events suggest this was a serious operational failure. In the light of these developments, will we call upon the President to establish a commission of inquiry to investigate the decisions, the strategic missteps and the

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conditions that led to this outcome to ensure accountability and restore confidence in the SANDF's leadership? If not, please explain the rationale for your position. Thank you very much, Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): House Chairperson, this Parliament raised the need to have a judicial commission of inquiry. How I wish that Members of Parliament, at the end of the day, would influence or give direction as to what terms of reference should guide such an inquiry. So, you depend on Parliament to take that decision. On our side, we will not resist, but in the meantime, the boards of inquiry within the Department of Defence, as per the Defence Act, will continue to take place. That question you are asking, it is this House that must direct it to the President through a judicial commission of inquiry. No shortcut. Thank you.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza Khensa, Mutshamaxitulu.

English:

Let me ask a question that will not require this House to do much more ...

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IsiZulu:

... ukuthi, babuya nini?

English:

When will the troops land in South Africa, understanding that they are now in Tanzania? When are they touching down in South Africa so that we can see that they are safe and sound? So, this question does not require Parliament to do anything. Thanks very much.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): House Chairperson, young men, you are out of order. You must ask questions properly. On a serious note, hon members, the first phase of our troops is in Tanzania, and they are safe. What is happening now, we are battling with logistical support. There are those who will be coming home by air. So, you need to make sure that you have proper documentation in terms of the Public Finance Management Act. Who are you going to hire? Which companies have been listed or have been targeted to do this work?

Secondly, the equipment, the equipment has to come back to South Africa. You can't leave your arms and your tanks behind. So, the

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shipment of those weapons from Tanzania, we also need to make sure there is a ship identified to bring those weapons. So, I am not in a position, hon member, to say the troops will come back tomorrow, but the Minister and the commander of the Defence Force said they want to make sure that this operation of withdrawal is completed by the end of the month. I am not the Minister; I am just telling you what my bosses are saying. Thank you.

Ms M RWEQANA: Thank you, hon Chair, Minister, in light of the SANDF fatalities in the DRC, and the ongoing deployment under severe budget and equipment constraints, how do you justify the continued foreign operations without a formal inquiry into operational failures or accountability for troop safety, especially when over 50% of SANDF equipment is unserviceable, and our forces are ill-equipped to respond to threats even within South Africa?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS (Mr B H Holomisa): House Chairperson, your question reminds me of the campaign by our predecessors who have been saying the defunding of the defence force is not in the interest of national security. To address or reverse what you are saying, we would

need, therefore, the support of the National Treasury. The government will say, the defence force must be prioritised as one of the key institutions which must be helped.

You see this when you look at the Cuban deal. We must remember that in 1998, defence spending was only targeted to replenish equipment for the air force, navy, but the army itself is still operating trucks which are 34-35 years old, and these Cubans came down here to help and fix these vehicles inside the country. That is why they are still in a position to move around. The sooner we do a threat analysis for this country, look at the threat from outside, look at the threat from within, and whether there would be an uprising in future, would we have adequate equipment to quell such things?

So, there is a need to do a thorough appreciation, and then we say, as Parliament, we ask the government, please prioritise defence. When National Treasury says to us in the portfolio committee, the money which was supposed to have been given to defence was diverted to save the SOEs, was channelled to free education and so on. So, we need to balance, apply a balancing act when we are talking about defence. Thank you [Time expired.]

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members, on that sobering note, we have gone past the 30 additional minutes for this set of questions. The answer to the last question will be published in the ordinary manner. I request the hon members to stand and wait for the Chair and the mace to leave. That concludes the business of the day. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 18:38.