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PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at 15:00.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, could we just have order please? Before we proceed with today's business, I wish to announce that the vacancy which occurred in the National Assembly owing to the resignation of Mr M M Dlamini has been filled with effect from 8 September 2025 by the nominations of Mr M Khoza.

Additionally, the vacancy which occurred owing to the passing of Mr K P Sithole has been filled by the nomination of Mr A K Ngobese with the effect from 16 September 2025. The members

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have made and subscribed the Oath in the Speaker's Office and it is my privilege to welcome you, hon members.

Mrs H O MKHALIPHI: Can you see them, Deputy Speaker? Hon Khoza is here in the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Mkhaliphi, that will be in order if the members wish to rise so that we can welcome them properly.

Thank you very much and welcome, a very enthusiastic welcome, hon members.

Lastly, hon members will recall that during the questions to Ministers in the Economics Cluster 5, questions directed to the Minister of Tourism and the Minister of Small Business Development stood over in terms of Rule 144(1)a). These questions will be taken today in terms of Rule 138(5). Consequently, an additional 30 minutes will be added to today's question time for this purpose as provided for in terms of Rule 138(5)b). Hon members, the only item on today's order paper is questions addressed to Ministers in Cluster 1, Peace and Security.

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Mrs H O MKHALIPHI: Deputy Speaker, we have an issue here. I just realised that the Ministers who are supposed to answer questions are not here in the House and we have been raising that issue for more than 1 000 times to say Ministers must be in the House. It works better if they are here. Even now, the first Minister who is supposed to answer the questions is not here. Even the one that is acting, who is supposed to have more energy is not here. It means that in this Parliament they are taking us for granted and Deputy Speaker, in the absence of the Speaker, you must protect us. We must know why the Ministers are not here because if you are going to allow this thing, it means that Parliament is not taken seriously. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Mkhaliphi. Yes, Deputy Chief Whip.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE LARGEST MINORITY PARTY: Hon Deputy Speaker, I just want to acknowledge that the issue that is being raised by hon Mkhaliphi was ventilated in the Chief Whip's Forum and the hon Frolick took it upon himself to take the matter to the Speaker and we also did so to say that we will then also talk to our members who are in the executive to

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avail themselves in the House as and when we have question time. Thank you, very much hon Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I am not going to entertain more points on this because this is the same point. Hon Skosana, is it a new angle to the matter?

Mr D M SKOSANA: Yes, it is a new angle. The new angle is that the issue of the interpreters at home as well, even if they are interpreting here, those who are online, they cannot get any interpretation. So, we have been raising this matter several times and there is nothing happening. I do not know whether we ignored it deliberately, but please, we are not here for ourselves. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are now two issues. Let me deal with the first one and that is Ministers not being present when it is question time. Hon Mkhaliphi, that is indeed a problem. It was also a problem yesterday, which I also then referred to, but I have now also been informed that this was discussed in the Chief Whip's Forum this morning, a forum where I do not sit. And we will take this further because I also have to stress it from the Presiding Officer's side, it is not

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acceptable that the Ministers are not present when these questions are planned long before.

We know that things happen, but I think preference should be given to what happens in this House where Ministers are held accountable through questions. So, we take that matter very seriously. Then, hon Skosana, indeed, I will look further into the whole question. So, if I just want to make sure, you are referring to the interpreting on the virtual platform, the availability of that? Let me just make sure that that is the case.

Mr D M SKOSANA: Yes, Chair, yesterday there was no interpreter here at all for all the African languages. It was only English and Afrikaans and at home as well, there was nothing at all. I ask one staff member who he replied that there is a shortage of staff. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Good, I will take that further because that is also a very important function that we provide to our members.

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Hon members, we will now proceed with item one. It will be the only item, and that is questions addressed to Ministers in Cluster One, Peace and Security. There are four supplementary questions on each question. Parties have given an indication in which questions their members wish to pose a supplementary question. Adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose. The members who will pose supplementary questions will be recognised by the Presiding Officer. In allocating 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 due to technological difficulties, the party 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 question paper.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

CLUSTER 1 - PEACE AND SECURITY

Question 902:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Deputy Speaker, good afternoon to all the members in the House. The question's

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premise is flawed. According to the latest available statistics, 9 287 arrivals were recorded for Israeli passport holders in the 2024 calendar year, compared to 9 115 departures. For the period 1 January 2025 until 11 September 2025, 6 917 arrivals and 6 927 departures of Israeli passport holders were recorded.

This is compared to the total arrivals of 9 935 381 so far this year, which means that only 0,07% of all arrivals in South Africa in 2025 were travelers from Israel. Additionally, in 2025, so far, there have been slightly more departures than arrivals. The so-called influx that the hon member refers to therefore simply does not exist.

In terms of the second part of the question, the purchase of property is subject to local laws and regulations, including compliance with the Financial Intelligence Centre Act, and that is a process with its own procedures and requirements that falls outside of the immigration space. Thank you very much.

Ms M B B MUHAMMAD: Chair, may I be seated?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, you may.

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Ms M B B MUHAMMAD Thank you. Hon Minister, thank you for your response. This is not only about statistics. You said there is only a certain number that arrived on the Israeli passport. Are you also including those with dual citizenship, when you are giving those numbers? South Africa can see Israeli nationals entering our country and buying up land and property, while millions of our own people remain ... Sorry. Sorry about that.

Given that South Africans are watching a quiet but dangerous wave of Israeli nationals... Sorry about that. I have my notes, all mixed up. South Africans are not blind. They see Israeli nationals entering our country with ease, buying up farms, property and land, while our people remain squeezed in shacks and backyard dwellings. This is not just about property. It is about sovereignty.

Minister, will you admit that your department's vetting processes are weak and that South Africa's risk is becoming a playground for foreign interests, while its own citizens remain dispossessed? And will you commit here and now to a transparent audit of all foreign nationals acquiring land and property in our republic, including the source of their money, so South Africans can know whether their land is being quietly stolen

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through the back door, while government sits in watch? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: I think, let me just indicate that we cannot make up our own realities and our own facts. The facts are as I have just relayed them. And so, whatever one's own eyes may say, we cannot use that as evidence above the actual evidence. And the actual evidence is what I have just provided.

In terms of the question around dual citizenship, the requirement around the world is for a person who holds dual citizenship to enter the country where they hold citizenship with the passport of that particular country. And that is something that South Africa also complies with.

I think more broadly, South Africa is on a quest to drive investment. We are not a country that wants to say that people should not be able to invest in South Africa. I don't think that is the message we want to send to the world with an unemployment rate of 33% and all the work that we still need to do.

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So, I think that that is not in the economic interest of our country to become a place that is insular and totally locked off from the rest of the world. So, I think South Africa's property regime, the security of our property rights, those are things that should be upheld and expanded to more people in the country, so that they can actually also enter that ladder of property ownership.

I would however caution Deputy Speaker that we don't give way to tropes. It is a very old trope and a very dangerous game to engage in claims of people squeezing out populations. There's even a tinge of antisemitism to this particular question. And I think it is important that we ground ourselves in facts.

If there was any evidence of what the hon member speaks about, then of course, we could look at that. But the reality is that 0,07% of the arrivals in South Africa are from Israel.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, there is a point of order. I think my message to you was just a bit delayed.

Mr S NOMVALO: Hon Deputy Speaker, once again the Minister has not answered the question. He has just been peripheral and ...

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, that is not a point of order.

Mr S NOMVALO: How are you going to hear me. Don't interject. At least, listen to me, then you come in. I am saying ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, I am now stopping you?

Mr S NOMVALO: I am raising a point of order. The Minister has not answered the main question. The question was about the vetting process. He has just given us statistics. Does the department have a vetting process? He must answer that and not just give statistics.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, to which Rule are you referring to? Indicate the Rule.

Mr S NOMVALO: I am raising a point of order. He has ...

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you must indicate the actual Rule.

Mr S NOMVALO: I am raising a point of order. He has not answered the question in terms of Rule 92.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh, no.

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Mr S NOMVALO: It does not say I must quote the Rule. It says that I must lay a basis for my point of order and that is what I am doing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. We have discussed this extensively in this House, in the Chief ...

Mr S NOMVALO: But he has not answered the question.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, you are now in contempt. That is a matter of argument and not a point of order. We have dealt with that extensively in this House. Thank you. We will now proceed.

Mr V G REDDY: Order, order, order, Deputy Speaker! Order! My hand is raised.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Reddy, do you have a specific point of order?

Mr V G REDDY: Hon Deputy Speaker, the previous person, hon Mkhali, did not mention the specific Rule, but you allowed her to speak on a point of order. And when the member from the

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MK did the same thing, you are insisting you want a specific Rule. Can you please be consistent in your rulings? I appeal. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will apply that, hon Reddy, but I also want to point out that I cannot allow members to dictate presiding from the floor. That is the prerogative of the presiding officers. And I also want to remind the members that it is not possible for the Chair to prescribe to the executive how they should respond to questions. That is what I have just been saying.

We have dealt with this in this House extensively. We will now proceed. The second supplementary question will be asked by the hon Chabane.

Mr M S CHABANE: Deputy Speaker, Minister, given the strange diplomatic relations between South Africa and Israel, how will Home Affairs ensure that regulations on the requirements for visitors into our country are consistent with the national interest? And can the Minister demonstrate mechanisms in place to vet such individuals? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, hon member, there is obviously a range of mechanisms in place, especially when it comes to your more long-term visa application. So, the requirements for a short stay tourist visit are significantly different from your longer stay visits. And in that particular case, there will be a much more comprehensive check of financial background, ability to maintain yourself in South Africa, so that you don't become a burden on the state. But also, of course, co-operation from the justice cluster, where there are more serious issues that need to be looked into.

However, I think the most important point on the way forward is the rollout of the electronic travel authorisation that we are embarking upon in the next few weeks. This will be a system that automates your application process but also has a critical role in the adjudication process.

We will start with short stay tourist visas, as I said, the simpler categories. But over time, our intention is to use technology to more securely vet your more complicated visa applications, going all the way up to permanent residency, which is obviously your most complicated one that requires the deepest scrutiny and consideration.

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So, we believe that even with the Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA's, ability to verify that your passport is a legitimate travel document with the face of a traveler who arrives in South Africa and that it actually matches the face, the biometric information on the passport, it will assist. This is laying the foundation really for us to have much more stringent, technologically empowered vetting procedures and adjudication processes that also will improve the efficiency of the system. Thank you.

Mr A C ROOS: Deputy Speaker, Minister, a top priority of our government and hence your department is to facilitate legal travel into South Africa that brings foreign investment that contributes to growing the economy and creating jobs. Could you elaborate on the initiatives your department has implemented to attract and manage responsible foreign investors and how these measures have already resulted in tangible benefits to grow the economy and create jobs? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, there is a range of initiatives underway, and I think one of the big focal points for Home Affairs is to also really play our role as an economic enabler in a more focused manner. And I think that is

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something that comes across when you engage with the business community. You will often find that what has been holding back investment in South Africa can sometimes be as simple as visas that have not been processed on time. In fact, I have recently taken to saying that this is a non-tariff barrier to investment in South Africa that we are systematically addressing.

So, the initiatives obviously include things like the Trusted Employer Scheme, the Trusted Tour Operator Scheme, which has now brought around 35 000 additional tourists from countries like China and India, where we have really underperformed over many years. But I think the most critical intervention is, as I have said, the rollout, over the coming months, of the Electronic Travel Authorisation, because that's going to really enable travelers to go online, submit applications, scan their passports, and upload all the information we need. We can then use technology to remotely and instantly verify this information and have a much more efficient and secure visa process that generates the kind of turnaround times that really would put us in a world-class league.

So, we started out this journey with South Africa still issuing paper documents, handwritten visas, in some cases, and we are

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now really moving very swiftly and in a focused way towards automating those kinds of processes. That is going to have a huge impact, not only on tourism, but on the confidence of businesses that South Africa, under the GNU, is reforming. We are embracing digital transformation, and we are creating better, clearer and faster processes for businesses, for investors, who want to come and invest in this country.

We know that we are under pressure in the global trading environment. We understand that tariffs hold a very serious threat to our economy, and that is why Home Affairs is really working flat out to play our role in enabling economic growth, despite all the challenges we face. Thank you.

Rev R J K MESHOE: Deputy Speaker, serious allegations made by hon Muhammad that they are, "watching a quiet but dangerous wave of Israeli nationals entering the Republic and buying up land and property, while South Africans struggle for homes and land" are xenophobic, hateful and divisive. In your vetting process, hon Minister, has your department kept a record of who, among the British, Americans, Israelis, Iranians or Sudanese who have bought land in this country has threatened our national security, and whether there is any evidence that

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Israeli nationals pose a greater threat to our national sovereignty than any other foreign investors or landowners? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Deputy Speaker, no, and I think we should be very careful not to replace evidence and facts, as I said at the beginning of my response, with our own impressions or even tropes that we are trying to push. So, I think the numbers do speak for themselves about the reality on the ground, as it pertains to this particular issue.

However, I also think, as I mentioned earlier, that South Africa's property regime extends far beyond Home Affairs. It's really a matter at the deeds office or at people who administer the property regime in South Africa to see what kind of patterns may be emerging.

I would emphasise though that South Africa should not become an insular society, where we lock ourselves off from the global economy, including through investments in property and other assets in South Africa, because then we will not be able to overcome the massive unemployment problem that we face as a country. And particularly now, as I said in my previous

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response, that we are under really unprecedented pressure from the way in which global trade is being restructured, we must use our ability to be an attractive investment destination.

And that should really be the apex priority for all of us as South Africans, because if we lock out private capital, if we lock out foreign direct investment, if we signal to the world that we are unfriendly to investors, not only from particular countries, but in general, then we are actually going to pay an enormous economic price.

The irony of, I think, the current global environment is that it is reaffirming the value and power of globalisation and global trade, because we are now starting to see what happens when the global trading system and things like foreign investment are reduced. We see countries suffering. We see economies declining.

And I think, out of this process, we should emerge as a more confident player in that global space and as a country that promotes free markets, free trade, and focus on the economics that is going to help us reduce unemployment. Thank you.

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Question 941:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon members, we now move on to question number 941, which has been asked by the hon Matthys to the Acting Minister of Police. The question is whether he appointed new support staff when he assumed office as Acting Minister of Police. If not, what is the position in this regard? If so, what has happened to the staff who previously served in the Ministry?

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon Deputy Speaker and hon members, my apologies for not having been in the House yesterday. I was at a Cabinet retreat in Tshwane, presided over by the President, and today at a Cabinet meeting, also presided over by the President.

It's an important matter that you raised, Deputy Speaker. No wonder this matter couldn't be addressed between your office and the Presidency going forward ... because I take my accountability to the House very seriously.

Thank you, hon member, for this question. I have not appointed new staff in terms of the Ministerial Handbook. I am, however, in the process of appointing a special advisor in terms of

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section 12(a) of the SA Public Service Act 1994, which makes provision for the executive authority to appoint persons under contract to advise on matters relating to their powers and duties. Ministers are limited to appointing two full-time advisors. Since only one position was filled at the time of my appointment, one position was vacant. That is my response, Deputy Speaker.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Deputy Speaker, your apology is not accepted. You were supposed to come to the House; don't be lazy. We are dealing with serious issues here.

Deputy Speaker, in light of your confirmation that you have appointed new support staff in the ministry while you're serving in it in an acting capacity, could you explain how these appointments are justified against the backdrop of SA Police Service, SAPS, severe resources constraint, including ongoing budget cuts, police stations at a stage of decay, shortage of vehicles to respond to crime scenes and broader infrastructure backlogs?

How does the Ministry reconcile spending on new administrative staff with urgent operational needs on the ground? What

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measures have been put in place to ensure that limited resources are prioritised for frontline policing? What happened to those people who were there before you came? Did you fire them? Are you increasing unemployment in this country as an Acting Minister? We are not responsible at all. Thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you for the response. I made it very clear in my response that I have not replaced the existing staff in my office. They are all currently in position. Secondly, I have only taken steps to appoint one special advisor because there was a vacancy in that position. I'm entitled to do so in terms of the Ministerial Handbook. Thank you.

Ms J L MOKOENA: Deputy Speaker, we are making a comment instead of a question, given that the matter of appointing staff in the Minister's office is a practice that is provided for in the Public Service Act, the Public Service Regulations, as well as the Ministerial Handbook of the executive to follow when appointing staff in their offices.

We are, however, confident that when the Acting Minister considers appointing staff in his office, should the need

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arise, he will be guided by the provision of our laws and the Ministerial Handbook. Thank you.

Ms L SCHICKERLING: Deputy Speaker, Acting Minister, good afternoon. Can you please explain how changes or the absence of change in your support staff have impacted the functioning and efficiency of the Ministry, and to what extent these decisions were influenced, either by the need for continuity, considerations of cost-effectiveness or political discretion? Thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you, hon member, for the question. All those considerations are, of course, pertinent to the decisions that I have to make. All I can say is that for the time being, I have decided not to replace any of the existing staff, except to appoint a special advisor, Mr Gareth Newham, into a position that is vacant to avoid, as far as possible, incurring additional costs. Thank you.

Mr D M SKOSANA: Deputy Speaker, what objective criteria in strict compliance with the Ministerial Handbook and the Public Service Regulations did the Acting Minister apply when removing

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staff or what process have you applied to employ the very person we are talking about?

Has the Minister had any inquiry done in relation to Mchunu's support staff, considering the allegations levelled against their principal? Is there any indication that due to their close working relationship, they may have been aware of his alleged conduct? And finally, in the event that Mchunu is dismissed, what will their employment status be? Thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon member, I'm a little bit unclear about whether you are asking me why I have not removed members or not. But let me try to clarify.

Yes, I have not made any decisions to reassign any of the staff who worked in the previous Minister's office. For the time being, I have made one appointment, as I'm entitled to do, of Mr Gareth Newham, or it's in the process of being implemented. In my judgement, he is one of the most expert policy analysts of policing, safety and security. I'm thrilled, in fact, that he has agreed to act to be appointed in this capacity. Thank you.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Acting Minister. We move on to question 889, which has been asked by the hon Sokanyile to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans. Yes, hon Skosana?

Mr D M SKOSANA: The Minister again has not answered about the criteria that he applied. He has not answered me. What criteria has he applied to hire that person he is talking about?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will allow that because that was a very specific question. Acting Minister, is it possible for you to reply to that, to the specific criteria you applied in appointing your special advisor?

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Yes, Deputy Speaker. I made it very clear in my response that I was acting in terms of section 12(a) of the SA Public Service Act 1994 as well as the provisions of the Ministerial Handbook. I explained that in my judgement, he is among the most qualified persons on policing in the country, having been employed in the Institute for Security Studies, ISS, for many years. He is about the most esteemed researcher in this field and he also worked with me

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when I was the MEC for Community Safety in Gauteng many years ago, where he did an excellent job. Thank you very much.

Question 889:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Minister ... oh, ok.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, please give me a moment. Hon members, the question is directed to the Minister, and the Minister is on line to answer. Hon Minister, please proceed.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for the question from the member. The answer is, since the Constitution does emphasize three core values which are human dignity, equality and freedom, and the department has adjusted its departmental policies to regulate gender equality in the defence force.

Similarly, the national defence force did initiate several activities which in the human resource, HR, value chain, in which gender equality has been emphasised. And the advancement of women representation in the department has gone through a number of changes. It has improved, for instance, from 1994 it

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improved from 20% and currently stands at 25%. But there's also improvement in terms of the representation of women in the leadership. It has improved with 15% and it now stands at 34%.

But there have also been improvements in other areas. In career opportunities for women, in combat, which was unblocked in 1995 through acceptance of women combatants on military courses, and the appointments in combat roles. Moreover, women representation with technical mastering improved with 18% since 1984.

So, the national defence force and the acting secretary of defence have committed themselves to continue to institutionalize gender mainstreaming and also ensure that there is a process of women empowerment and advancement within the department. I thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Ms T SOKANYILE: Minister, following your elaboration on initiatives to advance women's representation in the SA National Defence Force. Which targeted training, mentorship and developmental programs are being prioritized to equip women for leadership, command technical roles? And how is the SANDF

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measuring the impact of these efforts to ensure sustained progress, Minister?

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: I can confirm that the department has a number of programs which are meant to advance women, those will include mentoring, those will include training, but also those will already include specified areas of training. There's also a whole process of gender mainstreaming, so that all training opportunities that are in the department, women are given or have access to those training programs, so that even men themselves are trained into gender mainstreaming, gender sensitivity.

On the other hand, women themselves are given opportunities to train in all areas, but with also emphasis to make sure that there is mentoring, but there's also direct training programs for them to advance in the different areas where women have not been participating in the past.

But the main thing is that the whole training is mainstreamed, and women are given the opportunities directly, purposefully and also with clear intentions of assisting them to rise within

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the ranks of the defence force. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Mr C HATTINGH: Deputy Speaker, given that women comprise only about 28% of the SANDF uniformed personnel, and that only six of the major generals, that's two-star generals, admirals are women, that's 15%. Could the Minister specify the current percentage of women in senior command leadership roles? And how do these figures compare to the intermediate milestones and the recommended number that should be arrived at? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, I thought in my response, I did read some of the figures, so I'll repeat the numbers I've read. We did say in terms of uniformed women, it has moved from 20% in 1994 to 35%, now as it stands. But the movement forward, we've also admitted that in leadership positions, it has improved, it's 15%, but now it stands at 34%, for middle management and in terms of the higher echelons, the member is quite correct that we only have one woman, three-star general. And then we have quite a number of them in the second levels, two star general.

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So, despite the fact that, as I say, we have 35% of them in uniform, but there are very few of them that have gone through the processes to really reach or represent a 35% at senior level. And that's the area which is getting more attention and lots of focus as to how we really create opportunities but also create spaces for women to move through the ranks of the defence force. But other senior echelon it's not satisfactorily adequate, Deputy Speaker.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Deputy Speaker, I would like to know out of this 34%, how many of those women, of the so-called coloured woman, and Indian women, who are also in high-ranking positions? Or are you treating them the same as you are treating the ... [Inaudible.] ... where there is no political will to deploy so-called coloured people and Indian people to high-ranking positions? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, I didn't ... [Inaudible.] ... that I'll be required to give your racial divisions, which I can. But I'm quite aware that they are women. So how many I really don't have the figures with me. There are women who are in very senior positions who are coloureds. They are also women who are very senior also who

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come from other racial groups even be white or Indian. But I could give a figure when I have that opportunity.

And to say we would please them as Cape coloured as other coloured groups with contempt. I don't think that's the attitude of the department. We believe in what the Constitution say - that we're a non-racial country which must give everybody an equal opportunity. So, people will not be stopped or blocked from advancing in the system simply because they are coloureds or Indians.

Mr M V DANIELS: Deputy Speaker, on point of order: The Minister is misleading the House, because ... [Inaudible.] ... for years has been fighting for recognition ... has not happened and that is my point of order. Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, that is not a point of order. That is a point of debate. Hon Minister, please proceed.

Mr S H M VAN WYK: Deputy Speaker, on point of order: We are being we are being misled here because the fact of the matter is there's a lot of so-called coloured woman who are part and parcel of the ... [Inaudible.] ... and told today they don't

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enjoy benefits, housing ... that is the truth. Thank you,
Deputy Speaker.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, that is not a point of order.
You are now entering into a debate.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker,
I have concluded what I would have said in relation to what the
follow up question required of me.

Ms L M NGOBENI: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, as well as
the Minister. My question to the Minister is the fact that the
Minister has cited the numbers and unit breakdowns as she had
alluded in her response, yet the reality is unmistakable. It is
a growing concern that women still occupy only a sliver of
senior command and critical technical posts within the SA
National Defence Force. This is no longer about counting heads,
but about dismantling the entrenched barriers, training
partners, recruitment filters and a culture that discourages
advancement.

What we want the Minister to do is to tell this House cleanly,
what decisive action will she take in the next 12 months to

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break those barriers and ensure that talented women can rise to the very top of our defence force. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for the question. It does not even require 12 months because there is a transformation program that falls under HR, which is focusing on an ongoing basis, yesterday, tomorrow and next week, on the different steps that we have to take as to correctly say to make sure that there is a conscious and a deliberate program to make to advance women.

So, we don't need anything new, but we can share also with members that there is a comprehensive program which is looking at ways of ensuring that indeed there is upward mobility for women in the defence force.

And I have admitted that at the senior level, we don't have satisfactory representation and that's why there are conscious and deliberate efforts on an ongoing basis, not in the year, ongoing to make sure that we do exactly what member Ngobeni is advising. So, we are doing that.

Question 920:

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The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Thank you very much for the question again. Deputy Speaker, there is no evidence that the Chief of Defence Force contravened the provisions of the above Act, as the member has quoted, and the opinion pieces that was made in the member's private capacity by another member. Indeed, the member is correct to quote Act 42 of 2002, which reads that neither the Defence Force nor its members may, in performance of their duties, prejudice a political party interest that is legitimate in terms of the Constitution or in a partisan fashion, further any interest of any political party.

Therefore, Deputy Speaker, the answer is that there is no evidence that he contravened the ... [Inaudible.] ... and therefore, all the other matters that the member would have expected falls off or are unnecessary. How he got permission is an ongoing basis. The Chief of Defence Force, as much as he's an appointee of the President, he reports directly to the Minister, and I approve his trips. Therefore, that trip was approved as late as last year, but unfortunately, for different reasons, it could not be undertaken. It was postponed again earlier this year. This time, it was the third time that we're trying to undertake the trip, and the permission is sought from

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the Minister, like in any other department where the head of department is authorised to travel by the Minister responsible. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr C HATTINGH: Hon Deputy Speaker, thank you. The response is exactly as expected. The utterances of the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF, was published internationally. There was no repudiation, apart from some reaction from the Department of International Relations and Co-operation, Dirco, as well as from the Presidency, but the Chief of the SANDF never denied that he said that. It was published internationally, on television, TV, and everywhere. Yes, there's perhaps not sufficient legal evidence to pursue to a court, but, hon Deputy Speaker, the opinion editorial that was written by Rear Admiral Tshabalala was published widely. He said it was in his personal capacity.

Now, does the Minister say that any member of the SANDF, uniformed member of the SANDF, can go public on any political issue, internationally, locally, and is that her interpretation that that is okay and allowable in terms of the Defence Act, the Constitution, and the Military Code of Conduct? Just to say, it's my personal capacity. I thank you.

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The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, in relation to Admiral Tshabalala's opinion, which he did indicate that it's in his personal capacity, broadly, it's allowed, but where the member would have been right, it's when it contradicts that which is supposed to stand for. Therefore, reading Admiral Tshabalala's opinion, there was also no legal or even policy contradiction in what he had said, even in his personal capacity.

Therefore, in terms of the general, I also had access, because I did ask him to give me a copy of the speech that he read when he was in Tehran. I read it. I can confirm that that speech, even if it was said in France, it would not have created problems. It created problems because it was in Iran at the wrong time because of these geopolitical conflicts. The Department of International Relations and Co-operation makes broad national policies of international relations. Every department has the responsibility to push and advance policy or international policies in respect of the areas of their work.

For instance, the head of economic development must understand the economic policies of the country and speak on them and not wait for Dirco to tell the world what our economic policy is.

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The Chief of Defence Force, as the policy head of defence, is expected to be able to articulate what is the policy of the country on the matters of defence. Therefore, to articulate that as head of policy can't be problematic. Again, I want to repeat this, maybe member is right when he says that is what he expected, because that is what it is. He is expected exactly what it is.

Mr W T D PLAATJIES: Hon Deputy Speaker, through you to hon Minister, subsequent to your approval of the general's clarification regarding these comments during the Iran visits on 12 August 2025, and the subsequent discussion with the President around 8 September 2025, what innovative programmes or policies are you introducing to strengthen the SANDF's capacity for international military diplomacy, ensuring this effort enhances South African global reputation while fully complying with departmental policies and national foreign policy guidelines?

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, the Department of Defence and Military Veterans has a very elaborate programme on international relations. It signs memorandums of understanding, MOUs, with different countries,

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working together with Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and the Department of International Relations and Co-operation. In almost all the embassies, the department has what they call defence attachés who are also doing military diplomacy on behalf of the department.

Therefore, the question of international diplomacy in military areas is an ongoing core function of the department. As a result, workshops, training, information is shared broadly in the department to make sure that there's a common understanding as to what is our national policy in terms of international relations. However, specifically in the defence, it's also an ongoing discussion to say within the area of defence, the defence policy on international relations, it's driven from the department because it knows better, or as I say, it's better equipped also to understand that space and work with counterparts in Dirco and also in Justice and Constitutional Development, even the Presidency. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU: Deputy Speaker, through you to hon Minister, given the Minister's assurance that the general's statements were merely articulating government policy and not personal advocacy, what specific transparent monitoring

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mechanisms overseen by the independent official like the Inspector-General? Will her department establish to objectively assess and pre-approve all future public statements by SANDF members to definitively determine this difference? And how will this mechanism's ruling be enforced to prevent its findings from being ignored for politically expediency reasons? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, in honesty, I don't see where the Inspector-General would even have a role in terms of defence diplomacy. As I say, we have a whole broad department within the Department of Defence and Military Veterans that deals with military diplomacy. There are defence attachés that are employed in the department in every embassy to also inform the department of the international space. All these people report to the military intelligence head. Therefore, the Inspector-General will have a different mandate from that which military intelligence in terms of military diplomacy will be working.

As a I said earlier, Deputy Speaker, there's ongoing programmes and there's ongoing training. We train people, even now we're deploying several of our employees to go and fill posts in

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international relations offices all over the country. Through those programmes, as I said, there's discussion, and there's collaboration with the Department of International Relations and Co-operation. Basically, the system is flowing on its own.

The problem of Iran, it's a different problem because we don't need to monitor it. The department, on point, but even has joint exercises with other countries. Therefore, there is currently no need to do anything extra than working with Dirco and with the Presidency on issues of international defence diplomacy. The Inspector-General has a different role, which does not fit into this space. Therefore, there won't be any need to be working with him because it has nothing to do with his immediate responsibilities, Deputy Speaker.

Xitsonga:

Ttn S M GANA: Xandla xa Xipikara ...

English:

... through you to Minister, that's why you have touched on the areas as it relates to what the general has said. I want to check with you as far as you know, was there consultation with Dirco and the South African Embassy in Tehran ahead of the

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visit? If there was that consultation, what was the advice of Dirco through the Embassy of South Africa in Tehran ahead of the visit? Thanks very much.

Xitsonga:

Ndzi khensile swinene, Xandla xa Xipikara.

English:

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, as I explained, that in every Dirco's office, there is a defence attaché person. Therefore, when we go to a country, they prepare as an office, which means Dirco and our defence attachés, to give us information about the country where we are going, what the issues are. But also, when we go from the country, we must inform Dirco so that it knows, not that it will give us permission. Dirco is aware where we are, in terms of assisting with logistics, in terms of assisting with the latest information, and information that we need to include into our notes.

Therefore, again, the Tehran thing, because it became a media thing, is an ongoing activity in the department, where, as I say, travelling is not necessarily sought from permission,

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sought from Dirco, but the information of what needs to be raised or attended to, it could be a joint information exercise that we would get from our offices which work with Dirco wherever we are going. Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I'm done.

Ms L M NGOBENI: Deputy Speaker!

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member!

Ms L M NGOBENI: Deputy Speaker, this is hon Ngobeni online. May I just request, and I don't mean to interrupt proceedings, but is it possible that the Table can automatically mute everyone that is online because there is so much interference and when the responses are given, we receive feedback on this side. May I just ask that that can be done, please? Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, hon Ngobeni. Unfortunately, it is not that easy because we do have rules and that members cannot just be muted. It must follow specific rules and therefore we can't ask the Table to do that without the presiding officer calling the member, naming the member, and then asking them to be muted. I appreciate your concern, but that is how it works.

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We follow on to Question 892, and it has been asked by the hon Moela to the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation. The question is, given the election of the Republic as incoming Chair of the South African Development Community, Troika, and its current leadership of the Southern African Customs Union, how will the specified roles be used to strengthen regional integration, particularly in advancing economic and trade co-operation across the Republic? I have been informed that the Deputy Minister will be answering questions on behalf of the Minister. The hon Deputy Minister!

Question 892:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATIONS (Mr A Botes): Madam Deputy Speaker, it's correct, that we convened the Southern African Development Community, SADC's 45th Summit of Heads of States and of Government on 17 August 2025 in Madagascar, in the capital city. At that occasion, South Africa has been elected in the Troika. You'll recall that when we took over the stewardship of SADC it was held by Zimbabwe. Madagascar currently is the Chair of SADC and South Africa as part of Troika, has been elected as Deputy Chairperson.

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The important issue is we are assuming our leadership role both in the Troika and as Chair of the Summit, having hindsight that the last time that South Africa chaired the SADC Summit was in 2017. We obviously will use the positions both as the Chair of SADC and in the capacity of Troika to ensure that we restore the regional strategic position of SADC, promote the implementation of the SADC Integration Agenda, during this epoch of a poly crisis.

Importantly, we do anticipate that we are going to develop South Africa's Chair Strategy and Roadmap and a substantive Cabinet memo that will outline our thematic approach, our strategic priorities and key deliverables for our chairmanship that we will continue to do, participating with the state and nonstate actors over the next 10 years.

As it relates to the Southern African Customs Union, Sacu, you'll also recall that South Africa assumed the Chairmanship of the Southern African Customs Union on 15 July 2025. You would also reflect the key penholders of Sacu are evidently National Treasury and the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition.

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But important for Parliament is to note that our presence in Sacu represents opportunity of a gross domestic product of R6 trillion. We speak about R200 billion intra-African trade just within Sacu. Obviously, it takes place within the context of 70 million populace that are part of the membership of Sacu. So, we'll obviously continue to via the two sister departments inform Parliament of the work that we are doing.

Mr M S MOELA: Deputy Minister, following your outline of specific programmes South Africa is pursuing as incoming Chair of the SADC Troika and leader of the South African Customs Union, to advance regional integration through economic and trade cooperation, what measurable targets and timelines have been established for these initiatives? How is South Africa ensuring effective co-ordination with SADC member states to maximise their impact on inclusive economic growth and regional trade? Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATIONS (Mr A Botes): Hon House Chair and hon Moela, SADC has as part of its repository the 10-year Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan. Of course, the foundation of that specific plan is the matter about peace, security and good

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governance. Members would also recall that, that foundational aspect is reconcilable with the African Union Agenda 2063, in particular Aspiration 3, which speaks about the need to have an Africa that is premise on good governance and Aspiration 4, that advocates for a peaceful and secure Africa.

House Chairperson, obviously the three pillars of which the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan are premised on, speak directly to what our forefathers have produced through the Abuja Treaty and the Lagos Plan of Action. So, in essence, it speaks about the centrality of African economies and the economic integration of African economies. Pillar 1 speaks about industrial development and the need for further market integration. Pillar 2 speaks about the need to enhance infrastructure development. Pillar 3 speaks about the need to ensure that both the social and human capital of the region are adequately capacitated and mobilised to achieve the two pillars as outlined earlier on.

Of course, what complements this Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, which we ought to achieve by 2030 is the 50-year Blueprint Document of SADC from 2013 to 2063, which speaks about the need for SADC's own Industrialisation Strategy and

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Roadmap. Of course, the key pillar of that strategic outlook, we speak about critical minerals, manufacturing capacity, regional value chain. Thank you.

Ms Z S ABADER: Hon Deputy Minister, while South Africa's leadership of SADC Troika and Sacu present opportunities to strengthen regional integration, past experiences show that these roles have too often been symbolic rather than transformative. What concrete time-bound measures will your department take to ensure that this chairmanship delivers real economic justice for the poor, for example, breaking the structural dominance for foreign and apartheid era corporations in intra-SADC trade, advancing beneficiation instead of raw exports and ensuring that small farmers, small, medium and micro enterprises, SMMEs and historically dispossessed communities in South Africa actually benefit from this regional integration? If not, why not? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATIONS (Mr A Botes): House Chair, I think the first issue that we obviously should really appreciate as one of the key overarching objectives of SADC, is the political stability and cohesion of all the 16 member states of SADC. It is for that

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reason that our intervention and contribution as part of the troop contributing countries, for example, in SADC both in missions as it relates to Mozambique and in missions as it relates to Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC have been informed. I think we are of a view that where there is no cessation of hostilities, there can actually be no development.

Those interventions of SADC in particular the Organ, have actually paid quite positive dues both in terms of Cabo Delgado and the northern part of Mozambique. I think members are aware about the increased stability which was brought about through the presence of troops from South Africa in the DRC. Thank you, House Chair.

Mr M A MNCWANGO: Hon Deputy Minister, arising from your response and given the persistent structural barriers to trade within the region, what concrete strategies will South Africa advance as Vice Chair of the SADC Troika, to improve infrastructure, harmonise regulations and reduce bureaucratic obstacles that hinder the free flow of goods and services?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATIONS (Mr A Botes): Hon House Chair and hon member, I

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think the key aspect as it relates to SADC ... I think what we should inform and one of the key aspects that we are going to be seized with even working in the Troika currently, is the fact that SADC does not have a critical minerals strategy. We think in terms of our value dispositioning as SADC, that should evidently be a key aspect and a responsibility that we assume. House Chair, we are saying because you'll recall that the African Union published its own critical and African Green Minerals Strategy in December 2024 and South Africa domesticated that strategy.

I think our ambition obviously is to ensure that all member states of SADC are actually having a domesticated version of the overarching African Union's critical minerals and Green Minerals Strategy beneficiation. So, that will obviously be a key priority now Chair.

Mr P A VAN STADEN: Deputy Minister when will the position of Chair of the Southern African Development Community Troika be utilised to address the trade relations between South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, given the fact that these countries currently close the borders for South African agricultural produce when they are in peak season? Thank you, House Chair.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATIONS (Mr A Botes): House Chair, I think there's two elements. For an example on what the hon member has said with Botswana, we work within the context of the SA Customs Union. So, our trade dispositioning to the rest of the world is via Sacu as that type of a subregional block. As we speak, having assumed the Chair of Sacu, there has been past difficulties as it relates to unilateral engagements in terms of trade. I think it's part of a very pivotal discussion where we are seized with reimagining of Sacu. What Sacu should mean for the future in terms of our own national interest and of course understanding that we use Sacu as an economic mechanism to ensure that there's absolute cohesion within amongst the five Sacu countries.

I think for SADC, one of the key issues that I think I must report to you members is that SADC has not yet completed its tariff offerings, for example, to the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA Secretariat. Sacu has completed its tariff offerings. So, there is much work. What we are doing as Department of International Relations and Co-operation is to use Sacu then as a basis for enhanced integration within the

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broader SADC region up until SADC's own tariff offerings to the AfCFTA Secretariat. Thank you, House Chair.

Question 960:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Hon Chairperson, I think I must state that these are not fresh allegations of genocide taking place. What we are seeing here is the expansion of genocide being committed against the vulnerable people of Palestine by the state of Israel.

We do regard, unequivocally, the conduct of the state of Israel being in breach of international law, and it is in clear violation of the provisional measures and orders previously issued by the International Court of Justice, ICJ, in the case of *South Africa v Israel*. As we speak, we are engaged in multitudes of diplomatic and other legal efforts to ensure that Israel positively responds to its obligations under the Genocide Convention. Thank you.

Mr I ISMAIL-MOOSA: Chair and Deputy Minister, considering the rich history of South Africa and our moral, duty-bound obligation to ensure that human lives are protected and that

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immediate remedies sought by the ICJ and International Criminal Court, ICC, against very serious war crimes, violations of genocide, and starvation are enforced, will South Africa cut all diplomatic, cultural, sports, and trade relations with the Zionist entity? Could the Deputy Minister elaborate on that specific issue?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Hon Chairperson, we have taken Parliament into confidence on the diplomatic downgrading and the recall of the entirety of South Africa's diplomatic personnel from Tel Aviv at that specific time, the mission there.

The important issue is that we are, obviously, prioritising the corridor in terms of our responsibility as a state under both the ICC and ICJ. What we have also done as the South African government is to play a pivotal role in the constitution of the Hague Group, which is a constellation of like-minded countries seeking to impose very specific measures against the state of Israel. These include engagement on arms, ammunition and the transportation thereof, and not allowing economic transactional diplomacy. That is what we do.

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Secondly, the important issue that we are engaged on with the Palestinian leadership is the consequent outcome, ultimately, of the two-state solution, as it relates to the current situation, especially the depopulation of Gaza by Israel. That aspect is key and critical because a two-state solution in essence says South Africa recognises Israel's right to exist alongside an independent, self-determined state of Palestine. That is the two-state solution. Evidently, once you sever the entirety of diplomatic relations, what you are in essence doing is moving for the derecognition of the state of Israel. That is the political debate taking place both in this Parliament, in this august House in South Africa, and with the Palestinian leadership.

Ms A N KUMBACA: Chair, to the hon Deputy Minister: In light of the confirmed famine, with more than 64 700 Palestinians dead, and Israel's continued noncompliance with the ICJ's provisional measures as of September 2025, how is the Department of International Relations and Co-operation assessing the worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza to further action before the ICJ, including possible enforcement under article 94(2) of the UN Charter? How is the Department of International Relations and Co-operation collaborating with the Department of

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Justice and Constitutional Development to strengthen South Africa's case ahead of Israel's countermemorial submission on 12 January 2026?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Chairperson, what we are being seized with apart from our intervention at the ICJ, in terms of article 94(2) of the UN Charter, it gives the privilege to a party that is in the ICJ to request the UN Security Council to make a specific decision or recommendation in relation to measures outlined by the ICJ. As we speak, that is one of the real options we are engaged with, invoking article 94(2) of the UN Charter.

The second aspect that we are looking at also is to take a course of action through article 8 applications, for example, to both the United Nations General Assembly, UNGA, and the United Nations Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC, under the UN Charter, to ensure that what we are doing at the ICJ, and what has been done by the ICC, finds greater prominence at UNGA and ECOSOC, which are two distinct but complementary organs of the United Nations.

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Ms N M MHLONGO: Chair, to the Deputy Minister: In light of the UN General Assembly resolution on 12 September 2025 to endorse the New York Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the implementation of the two-state solution, how long will it be before South Africa implements the Sixth Parliament resolution to cut all diplomatic relations with genocidal Israel? What is South Africa's stance on the continuing presence of the Israeli Embassy in the City of Tshwane and the Economic and Trade Office in Johannesburg, whilst Israel has been declared a genocidal country by 142 states? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Chair, I thought early on I spoke to that specific issue. There is a two-state solution. There is a two-state recognition from the Palestinian Authority, which includes the entirety of the member organisations of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Fatah, and other subordinate types of organisations. The UN and the people of Palestine have said to South Africa: Amidst the genocide, advance the nobility of the two-state solution. We are doing that by really championing the Palestine cause globally. It is one of the important issues.

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The second issue ... Remember, hon members, we prosecute the struggle as part of the struggle for self-determination of the people of Palestine. We are not leading the Palestine struggle. The Palestinian people themselves have asked us to continue to advocate aggressively, using all diplomatic means, to achieve the two-state solution. Derecognition of the state of Israel by the South African government would be antithesis to that call from the Palestine people. What we do, as a state party in relation to the Rome Statute ... As a state party to the Rome Statute, we are taking the genocidal conduct of the state of Israel to task. We took it to the ICC. We took it to the ICJ. I thought that is a key and critical issue. As we speak, we have no fundamental diplomatic relations with Israel.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Thank you, Deputy Minister. The last supplementary question will be asked ...

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Chair, on a point of order: Can the Deputy Minister answer specifically on why our leaders have not closed the embassy of Israel, as per the resolution of this House?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Mkhaliphi, I have not recognised you. I was recognising the hon Mhlongo.

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Ms N M MHLONGO: Chair, you can give it to the Whip, the hon Mkhaliphi.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: There is no protocol. Chair, order! We asked specifically, as per the resolution of this House, why it is taking so long to close the Israeli Embassy. We took a resolution in this House. It is a resolution of this House, Deputy Minister.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, hon member.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: We have been speaking about this matter for over a year now.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Mkhaliphi! I think the Deputy Minister did allude to that matter. That is a point of debate. The Deputy Speaker who was here has been raising the thing that, if you want to debate further, you can do that, but, once the Deputy Minister has responded to that question, he has responded to that question. Hon members, we are not going to continue with points of order on this because the Deputy Minister did respond to that issue, so we are continuing

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with the business of the House. Unless it is a different question, we are moving on. Hon Mhlongo?

Ms N M MHLONGO: Chair, the question was: How long will it be before South Africa implements ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Mhlongo, I did say we are not going to continue with this.

Ms N M MHLONGO: ... its resolution to cut off diplomatic ties and close the Israeli Embassy? That was the question, and the question was not answered. The Deputy Minister is sitting here. Ask him whether he has answered that question and, if not, allow him time to answer that question. That's ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, the Deputy Minister did answer the question.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Mr A Botes): The question was answered here. The question was answered twice.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Mhlongo, no! I am not going to allow ... [Interjections.] No! Hon members, I am not going to allow any further engagement on this question. If it is a point of order on this main question, because I have alluded that the Deputy Minister has responded to the question, I am making a decision that we are moving on from this point. We are not going to go back to that question again. Hon MkhaliPhi?

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Chair, we have also engaged on different platforms, with you included. Don't protect Ministers and Deputy Ministers. Don't be a stumbling block. We have resolved, if you want the executive to be accountable, allow them to answer questions. What you are doing now is blocking Members of Parliament from asking direct questions and getting direct answers. Don't do that, Chair. You are frustrating this House, and you are rendering this House very irrelevant by not allowing Ministers to answer questions. We have been there with you, Chair. Please don't occupy that position and forget your own decision.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon MkhaliPhi and all hon members, I will address this once. It is not fair that

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Ministers come here, respond to questions, and they respond to questions according to the information they have of departments. You come here with your own conclusion on how you want Ministers to respond. That is not how we run. Hon Mkhaliphi, on what you are saying, we have engaged on this. Yes, it is true, but the Deputy Minister didn't come here and say he doesn't know. The Deputy Minister did respond, so we are moving on from that question. The last supplementary question will be asked by the hon Thring.

Mrs E N NTLANGWINI: House Chair, my hand has been up for a while, and I did not want to interrupt you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Continue, hon Ntlangwini.

Mrs E N NTLANGWINI: I think it is quite unfair that Ministers just say, "Nywe," and then say, "I have answered," and that is an answer. We are going to take that as an answer. Many of us here know what answer he is meant to give, and he is running around with the answers. We have said on many a platform that these Ministers come here, but they don't answer the questions. This process of this House is turning into a mockery if you, as the Chairperson sitting in that Chair, are not upholding. Also,

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on the other side, Members of Parliament must hold the executive to account. We can't have Ministers that just come and say, "Nywe," and then they have answered. Then we, as Members of Parliament, don't feel satisfied that our questions have been answered. We have said it several times: We take our time to get these questions from our constituencies, and then these Ministers don't come and answer.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Ntlangwini! Hon Ntlangwini!

Mrs E N NTLANGWINI: A person just comes and says, "Nywe," and I have answered. What is this?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Ntlangwini, you are abusing us now. I have been calling you. I did say that the Deputy Minister did respond to the question, and we are moving on from that. I am not going to take any further hands with regard to that.

Mr M V DANIELS: I am going to have to call you to order, House Chair.

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Ms L M NGOBENI: House Chair, I am on the line.

Mr M V DANIELS: House Chair? House Chair, I am going have to call you to order because you have made a ruling, and yet you entertain.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, hon member. I would not have just assumed to know what the hon Ntlangwini was rising on, so I had to give her an opportunity to speak. When I heard that she was still going back to that issue, that is when I stopped her. There is absolutely no need for that. I must give each and every member of this House an opportunity. They do have that right to raise a point of order. If I have made a ruling and a member raises another hand, I cannot assume that they are raising the same matter. So, we are moving on from that. Thank you. Hon Mhlongo?

Ms N M MHLONGO: House Chairperson, I am calling a point of order on that man of the PA.

Ms L M NGOBENI: I am online, the hon Ngobeni.

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Ms N M MHLONGO: They went to Israel and are still wrong. They have blood money in their hands, and they come here and try to stop us when we push the issue of Palestine because ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Information technology, please switch off the hon Mhlongo.

Ms N M MHLONGO: They stole money in Israel.

Mr M SHIKWAMBANA: Order! Order!

Mr S H M VAN WYK: I want to know what happened to VBS, Chairperson.

Mr M V DANIELS: She must not come and say we have blood money here. What blood money?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members on the virtual platform ...

Mr M SHIKWAMBANA: Chair, my hand has been up ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): You have not been recognised.

Mr M SHIKWAMBANA: May I be recognised, Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members on the virtual platform, no one has recognised you. The only member I recognised is the hon Ntlangwini.

Mr M SHIKWAMBANA: Can I be recognised, Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, we are moving on from this. I am now taking the last supplementary question and giving it to the hon Thring.

Mr M SHIKWAMBANA: Chair, can I be recognised?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon member, I have not recognised you, so please. I have given the hon Thring an opportunity to ask a question.

Mr M W THRING: Can I proceed, Chair?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Please proceed, hon Thring.

Mr M W THRING: Chair, the ACDP is saddened by the loss of lives in Israel and Gaza. We understand that the current war began on 7 October 2023, when Hamas invaded Israel, resulting in the barbaric massacre of more than 1 200 people and taking 250 ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon members! Hon Thring, please. Hon members, can we not howl up to the point where we drown out the speaker? The Deputy Minister must listen to the question so that he will be able to respond. When the Deputy Minister does not respond, it will be you again, hon members, who are saying the Deputy Minister did not respond to the question. Can we give an opportunity to the hon Thring to ask his question? He has a right as well. He is a member of this House, so whatever question he wants to ask in relation to this question as a supplementary question, he has the right to do so. Can we please provide him with such? Continue, hon Thring.

Mr W M THRING: Chair, as I was saying, when Hamas invaded Israel, it resulted in the barbaric massacre of more than 1 200 people, not only Jews but people from around the world, and

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taking of some 250 hostages. This is the largest calculated mass murder of Jews in a single day since the Holocaust, with 50 hostages still being held.

The ACDP notes that the ICJ did not find that either genocide or plausible genocide had been committed but that Palestinians had a plausible right to be protected from genocide. It did emphasise that all parties in the conflict in Gaza are bound by international humanitarian law and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages by Hamas.

Now, Deputy Minister, in view of this and South Africa's nonaligned diplomatic policy, what is the South Africa government doing to assist with a ceasefire, including the release of the remaining hostages held in the most appalling conditions in violation of international law? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION
(Mr A Botes): Hon Chairperson ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majazi): Hon members, can we give an opportunity to the Deputy Minister to respond? I am sure the

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hon Thring would really to love to hear what the Deputy Minister will say.

Ms M R MOHLALA: He must just take the money of Israel back and then they will ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Mohlala! Information technology, please switch off the microphone of the hon Mohlala.

Mr W M THRING: On a point of order, Chair ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Thring?

Mr W M THRING: Chair, there have been aspersions that have been cast on the ACDP as taking money. I would like to make it very clear. I stand publicly in this House saying that the ACDP did not take a cent – not one cent – from any particular group in relation to this incident. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Thring, it is fine. I thought maybe you would have wanted us to make a ruling on that. I did not quite hear what other hon members said, but we will continue. Hon Ngobeni, on the virtual platform?

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Ms L M NGOBENI: Chair, I just wanted to call your attention to, whilst you are presiding over the physical House, please also try and preside over the virtual House because our hands have been raised for quite some time. What I want to just get, Chair, is whether "nywe" is parliamentary. Could you please rule on that so that we know what to do going forward? Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Sorry, hon Ngobeneni, you said what is parliamentary?

Ms L M NGOBENI: The term "nywe" – "nywe" – is that parliamentary or not?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Alright, we will have to come back to that one because I did not hear anyone saying "nywe" or something. I do not even know the term.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Chair, it is parliamentary.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): We will come back to that, hon Ngobeneni. Hon Nchabaleng?

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Mr A NCHABALENG: Chair, just a point of order: I think the question is misleading. Hamas and the Palestinians did not invade Israel. You cannot invade an invader.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, that is a point of debate, hon Nchabaleng.

Mr A NCHABALENG: Yes, let's open the debate.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): No, hon Nchabaleng. We are not opening a debate. I am going to give an opportunity to the Deputy Minister to respond, and there is absolutely no need for you to respond on behalf of the Deputy Minister. So, it is a point of debate. Please, you are out of order.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Chairperson, I think we should correct the issue. There is an occupying force, which is the state of Israel. The state of Israel since 1948, during the Nakba catastrophe, has occupied the land of the Palestinian people. There is an occupied group of people. The occupied people are the people of Palestine. That is the first issue.

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Secondly, as an organisation that subscribes to Christian philosophy, we cannot be saddened when more than 64 000 innocent women and children have been killed. We must actually be disturbed. That is my second intervention.

The third intervention is that you would recall President Ramaphosa participated in the peace summit, as anchored by the Egyptian leadership and the Arab League, where we have definitively made our voice known in relation to what needs to be done: cessation of hostilities, the return of the hostages, and the issue about a two-state solution and self-determination. We have made our views known. We support the current discussions with Qatar and Egypt as it relates to a peace agreement with Hamas. You would also recall, hon member, that our relationship, as South Africa, is with the Palestinian Authority bilaterally.

I think, lastly, maybe I must just say that the problem in Gaza ... You have a child that is born today in Gaza. Before the child is issued with a birth certificate, the child is issued with a death certificate. That is the consequence of the expanded genocide that is taking place. Thank you very much, Chair.

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Question 895:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Chair and hon member, thank you for this question. The department's collaboration with the SA Revenue Service, Sars, and the banking industry, is enabling the extension of Home Affairs services into rural areas and townships across the length and breadth of our country. In fact, it is in my view that the most pro-poor and most pro-inclusion reform that Home Affairs has, has seen in many years. By converting the existing partnership which has seen Home Affairs services rendered in 30 bank branches since 2016, most of those located in urban areas into fully-fledged digital partnership that uses the existing integration that exists between banks and the department.

Through the recently upgraded online verification service, we are able to introduce services at hundreds more bank service points in communities where Home Affairs currently does not have branches, or where these branches are not modernised, and therefore, unable to issue Smart IDs or where our branches are under particular strain. This ensures that citizens in rural and township areas, as well as urban areas, where there is huge pressure on Home Affairs offices, will benefit from a major expansion in accessing smart IDs, passports, and eventually,

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other services, and will no longer have to travel great distances to a particular Home Affairs office.

Additionally, the department will be introducing the option of home deliveries to reduce the need for multiple visits and roll out smart ID and passport services on banking apps, which are already used by millions of South Africans in urban and rural areas. Agreements have been updated with eight banks, with one outstanding agreement still being finalised. Once completed, the phased rollout will prioritise rural and township branches as part of the department's service expansion. Taking together this digital first reform will cut queues and enhance access to Home Affairs services on an unprecedented scale.

By bringing services closer to where people live than ever before, we are bringing to life our vision of using digital transformation to deliver Home Affairs at home. Thank you very much, Chair.

Ms N E MTOLO: Hon House Chairperson. Minister, We know that the department is working on moving service online to make them faster and closer to the people. In May 2024, President Ramaphosa, launched Home Affairs mobile truck in Mokopane,

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Limpopo, to bring services for the community through online services. - I am sorry. - President Ramaphosa, launched Home Affairs mobile truck in Mokopane, Limpopo, to bring services to the community. Will the online services replace these mobile trucks or will the two will work together, and if they work together, how will this be done to make sure that mobile trucks will not go wasted? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, Chair. No, this will be a process of addition and supplementing the existing services. The ultimate goal we have here, hon Chair and hon Mtolo, is to make sure that Home Affairs, in its entirety, becomes a much more mobile organisation. So, there are over 200 of those mobile trucks in the field that are travelling to service communities who do not currently have access to Home Affairs services. However, it is not nearly enough for a country of our size. Just to give the House a sense, Home Affairs has 349 permanent offices currently, but 101 of them are not modernised, which means you can't get a smart ID there, for example, that is still producing the Green ID book, which we know is very vulnerable to fraud and which we want to do away with.

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So, we have to massively increase the footprint of Home Affairs services through things like mobile trucks, but also going much further, to make sure that we have permanent presence, not only in bank branches, but also on people's smartphones so that you don't have to leave your house, ultimately, to access these services where there is connectivity. However, what this process will enable us to do, Chair, is eventually to make Home Affairs much more mobile so that we don't have to sit at offices and wait for clients to come to us, but go into communities, particularly rural communities, and systematically document South African citizens who have never been documented.

This is a very serious thing that I feel very strongly about members because in in our history, there are South Africans who were literally legally prevented from being documented as South Africans. Over the last 30 years, we have not systematically documented all of them, and now it's the time for us to make sure that we get routine transactions like renewals of smart IDs or passports out of our queues and turn Home Affairs into a much more mobile organisation that is able to go deep into communities and systematically document every South African. That's the end goal we can achieve if we roll out these routine

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services to many more locations in bank branches and on the ...
[Interjections.] [Time expired.]

Mr A C ROOS: House Chair. Minister, Home Affairs' pilot project to offer smart IDs and passport applications in bank branches has existed for eight years before your term commenced. However, since 2016, it is just 30 bank branches that were offering smart IDs and passport services almost exclusively in urban areas. So, the DA welcomes your urgency to expand this service to poor South Africans outside of urban areas.

Minister, how have you managed to resolve the roadblocks that kept the bank branches offering smart IDs and passport services, small and concentrated in urban areas to the massive increase in branches and reach to rural and township areas we see under your leadership?

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair and hon member, as I mentioned, we still have 18 million green ID books in circulation, hon members, that's compared to about 25 million smart IDs, and in order to close the challenges with identity theft and fraud in the financial sector that we experience because of the insecure green ID, we really need to empower.

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the South Africans to be able to replace the green ID book. So, when I came into office, this was one of the first things we had to understand, why are we still producing the green ID book and why aren't we able to actually move away from it? The answer was, indeed, that the partnership with the banking sector was a very good one, but it had taken a very manual approach.

In other words, it was not leveraging technology. Home Affairs was going into bank branches and setting up parallel structures, buying its own smart fingerprint scanners and cameras when the bank already has these, and critically, when the banking sector is already directly integrated with Home Affairs since 2013 through the online verification service that I mentioned. So, what we are now doing is to piggyback on the existing integration to make sure that we can actually use the digital pipes that exist already between Home Affairs and banks to make sure that we can get those services from the existing 50 branches to hundreds of bank branches, and ultimately, to more than 1000 bank branches across South Africa.

If we can get that right, we can use those same digital pipes to also go onto your digital banking app. So, it really is, hon

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member, the perspective that embraces technology and innovation, that has enabled us to reform this partnership to build on it and to make sure we have massive expansion through digital transformation.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Hon Minister, the National Development Plan, NDP, Chapter 13, speaks about building a capable and developmental state. It is explicit that South Africa must build the capacity of the state to deliver services and capable state, especially in strategic areas like Home Affairs and others. Yet, instead of strengthening internal capacity through internal digitisation of Home Affairs, the Minister is outsourcing digitisation to big corporates like entities that belongs to Banking Association SA, BASA, and SA Revenue Service, Sars, effectively handing over core state functions to white monopoly capital interest. Why are you working with the white monopoly capital companies in direct contradiction to the NDP's vision of a capable and developmental state?

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, firstly, let me indicate that, of course, Sars is a component of the state, but I think, more broadly, hon Chair, let me indicate that the definition of an incapable state would be one that is paper based, that uses

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manual processes and that does not roll out modern technology, including the smart ID that we already have to all citizens, and that this is the deficit we are addressing. If we want a capable state in the year 2025, hon members, we must embrace technology. The irony is that if I told any of you that you could only access your banking services through cash in a physical bank branch, it would be like going back in time, because the reality is that online service digital penetration in South Africa is a massive opportunity, not only to modernise the state, but also to embrace the digital economy.

So, what we are doing, effectively, is to catch up with where the world is in the year 2025, and we are doing so through this existing partnership and through the existing integration that already characterises the partnership between Home Affairs and the financial sector. So, at the end of the day, a government that is able to roll out digital ID where you can go on your phone to order a new smart ID and where, ultimately, you may not even need any kind of physical document because you have a digital ID that has all your birth certificates, you can verify your identity through that particular application.

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That is what a capable state looks like, and we are working with South Africans across the board in government, outside government to leverage technical expertise and make sure that we deliver for the people of South Africa so that they don't have to go and stand in a queue or fill in a piece of paper. That's an incapable state. We're moving away from that towards a capable state. Thank you, Chair.

Mr P A VAN STADEN: Minister, regarding the agreements with the South African banking services to expand digital banking partnerships in assisting with the issuing of smart ID cards and passports, can the Minister indicate to this House if all financial institutions, like all our commercial banks, are on board with this programme. Details can be provided on how the issuing of smart ID cards and passports will be done through these institutions, and if the other institutions in the private sector will also be involved in this programme in the near future, such as big supermarket chain stores and the fast moving consumer goods retailers. I thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, as I indicated in my original answer, there are eight banks that have already signed up to this partnership, and there's one more agreement that is

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being finalised. I think the intention from the hon member is correct to ask, how can we expand this to the maximum extent possible? We are very mindful of security, and we are very mindful of technical capacity, so, that's why we are starting with the banking sector where there is online verification service. So, when you go into a bank and you look into a camera, or you put your fingerprints on the scanner to open a bank account, that is verified against Home Affairs, and that has been the case since 2013.

So, we have a high level of confidence in that system. We've recently upgraded it as well, and that is something that is not new. Actually, it has been a backbone that's been there all along. So, we are starting with the space where there's existing agreements, where we know that there's capacity to implement this successfully because these institutions use that online verification service every day. Thousands of verifications are being done with Home Affairs. So, in principle, we are not opposed to looking at other ways to expand, but I think that we have to take it one step at a time.

So, just to give members a more concrete sense, what we are hoping for is that, really, within the next few months, you

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will start seeing your local bank branches rolling out service in your community. You'll be able to walk into that branch, and in many cases, you now find bank branches with terminals where you'll be able to punch in your ID number, verify your face against the Home Affairs database and use that as the security feature. You can then order the documents that you require. So, at the end of the day, hon members, Home Affairs controls this pipeline. Essentially, we are the back door that will only enable you to use this service if your biometrics match our records, and we are using the integration we already have with the banks to bring the front door to many more ... [Inaudible.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms Z Majozi): Hon Minister, we lost you for a second, but your time has expired. We lost you, but I'm sure when you come back again, maybe you will then finish off on that one. Hon members, we're now moving to Question No 935, which has been asked by hon Cameron to the Acting Minister of Police. The question is with reference to the assassination of Ms Babita Deokaran in August 2021 after she had flagged R850 million of dubious spending at Tembisa Hospital.

What are the reasons for the delay in the progress of the case, as four years later, only the gunmen sit in prison while the

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syndicate leaders and political masterminds remain untouched, and that the Hawks have never been held to account for ignoring evidence that could have broken the case open, including evidence in her laptop and phone that they seized but failed to examine. The hon Acting Minister.

Question 935:

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you, House Chair, and thank you to the member for this important question. Since my appointment, I have been informed that the Director of Priority Crime Investigation, DPCI, is prioritising the investigation of the murder in consultation with appointed prosecutors. The investigating team is following multiple leads in the case, and the investigation is ongoing.

I have been advised that the team is pursuing all available evidence related to this case, and each piece of evidence is being treated with the utmost care. The evidence includes forensic investigations on the laptops and cell phones of individuals linked to the case. I have been informed that no evidence was ignored by the investigating team.

My office will continue to monitor the case. I am aware of the writing of Mr Jeff Wicks on this matter, and the worrying

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assertions he has made. I am also alarmed by the apparently rising trend of assassinations of many whistleblowers this year, including Pamela Mabini in the Omotoso trafficking and rape case on 7 March this year, Elona Sombulula, a prosecutor in the Eastern Cape on 29 April 2025, and Mpho Mafole, the chief auditor in Ekurhuleni on 30 June 2025. He is the second auditor to be murdered in two years. Tracy Brown, a prosecutor in Gqeberha on 31 July, and Bouwer van Niekerk, most recently an insolvency lawyer, who was shot dead on 5 September.

I have directed the national commissioner to monitor these assassinations of whistleblowers, public officials, including councillors, after a submission received from premier Lesufi to monitor these cases and to keep my office informed. Clearly, these vicious killings are not isolated events. This is yet more evidence of a growing problem of organised syndicated crime, often aimed at covering up corruption, as was the case with the murder of Babita Deokaran.

Mr I CAMERON: Thank you, Chairperson, Minister, the DPCI ...
[Interjections.] ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Cameron, just hold on for a moment. Hon members on the virtual platform, if you are not recognised, please remain muted. [Interjections.] Hon Motaung, please mute yourself. Hon Cameron, continue.

Mr I CAMERON: Thank you. ... has faced significant capacity constraints since its establishment. They're essentially fighting with their hands tied behind their backs. When will the directorate be fully capacitated in terms of personnel and specialised equipment? And too often, foot soldiers are arrested while the kingpins ordering these assassinations walk free. Minister, do you agree with this position? And if so, how can this be addressed? Thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you, Presiding Officer, and hon Cameron, yes, indeed, you're absolutely correct. The DPCI is an important investigative structure. Its capacity is not where it should be at this point, although it does have important capabilities. Building this capacity is going to be one of my priorities, precisely because, as I've indicated on numerous occasions, organised crime is a growing problem. I believe that the DPCI should be focused on organised crime. It has multiple mandates at the

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moment. I am, as you are probably aware, in agreement with the recommendations made by the Anti-Corruption Council, which I had the privilege to chair until recently. Its recommendations include refocusing the DPCI on organised crime, but obviously, this is a matter that will have to be under consideration in the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster and the Cabinet. Thank you for your question.

Mr E A CLOETE: House Chairperson, in light of the response provided, what steps has the Minister taken to ensure that the Hawks are being held to account for the initial failure to act on key evidence and follow up on the financial and procurement irregularities flagged? Thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): House Chairperson, Hon Cloete, as I indicated in the reply, based on information that the DPCI provided for the purposes of replying to the question asked by Mr Cameron, they have indicated that the investigation is ongoing and that they are investigating the matter rigorously. In my reply, I also indicated that there are opinions in public, also published opinions, which call this into question, which is why I made reference to Mr Wick's writings, which I am familiar with, and I'm certainly putting

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these questions to the Hawks. I am unaware of specific instances in this regard of procurement irregularities in the DPCI, which is a separate matter, but if you care to bring them to my attention, I will certainly take the matter forward. As you are aware, I assume these kinds of matters are indeed investigated by the Independent Police Investigative Directorate, Ipid, which is also a structure that falls, broadly speaking, within my ambit. I hope that answers your question.

Mr E HENDRICKS: Chair, will the Acting Minister commit to quarterly public updates on high-profile corruption-linked assassinations, starting with Babita's case? Thanks.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon Hendricks, I take the spirit of your question to be a concern, which I fully share, that we've had numerous such assassinations. I pointed out in my reply to Mr Cameron's question that we see a rising trend, which is why I made reference to a number of assassinations this year. I share your sentiment that what is important is that these matters are properly investigated, that the perpetrators are prosecuted, that families are communicated with, and that the police are publicly accountable on these

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matters. Whether they are going to be in a position to meet that standard is for the time being in question. I have raised this matter with the national commissioner in writing and asked him for regular updates. I will certainly be more than willing to share information with Members of Parliament. Of course, subject to one caveat, perhaps, is that where there are ongoing investigations, it would be irresponsible for me to share information which compromises the investigations. But I fully accept the spirit in which you're asking this question on an important matter concerning the accountability of the police for results in such matters. If I'm able to report positive results to the House, that would be of interest, and if I'm unable to, we will be able to draw the right conclusions. Thank you, hon member.

Mr R A P TROLIP: I will be handling hon Beesley's follow-up question. It is now, shamefully, two weeks after the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Babita Deokaran. Four years and two weeks. We see some progress with the asset attachment of an individual allegedly involved in the Tembisa Hospital corruption, who is incidentally related to President Ramaphosa. The hapless handling of this investigation by the DPCI reminds me of what the ANC chairperson, Minister Mantashe, recently

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told the thousands of ANC councillors who gathered for their recent roll call parade, when he said, and I quote, "You're all singing councillors but when it comes to capacity, dololo. [nothing]" Was the ignoring or avoidance of examining and using ... [Interjections.] ... I need some protection, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order, hon members! Hon Trollip, please continue.

Mr R A P TROLLIP: ... of the material and incriminating evidence done by default or by design? When can we expect some arrests, hon Acting Minister?

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon member, I have given an answer to the best of my abilities within the information I have at my disposal. I share your outrage, really, on this matter, since I think the family and the public have a right to expect a conclusion to this matter. Until then, justice would not have been done. Otherwise, I do not think that the aspersions that you cast on the President are warranted, but you are clearly entitled to take the opportunity to be as partisan as you need to be.

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Question 903:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, Chair, and to the hon member for the question. Let me just indicate that this question is very similar to the first one I dealt with, so, my apologies if there's some duplication. Allow me to indicate that over the past five years, a total of 50 399 471 foreign nationals visited South Africa. Out of that total, 70 881 were from Israel, representing 0,14% of the total arrivals.

Furthermore, over the past five years a total of 60 140 applications for permanent residents were received by Home Affairs. Out of that total, 44 were granted to applicants from Israel, representing 0,073% of the total. I can also indicate that in 2024, 11 permanent residency applications were granted and in 2025 so far, just one. Thank you, Chair.

Ms M B B MUHAMMAD: Chair, may I be seated.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Please, remain seated, yes.

Ms M B B MUHAMMAD: Thank you. Hon Minister, it is important to distinguish between the actions of a foreign government abroad and the lawful activities of individuals seeking to invest or

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settle here. Traditional colonisation involved direct occupation but today colonisation has evolved. It is subtler, often operating through mechanisms of economic control, foreign investment and influence over key sectors.

By inviting foreign investors into South Africa, we are in fact inviting money, with money obviously comes influence and with influence comes potential control. This is not a hypothetical risk. Globally, we have seen how unchecked foreign influence can shape domestic outcomes whether economically, socially or politically. America, for example, did not anticipate the security risk post September 11, and only implemented heavy restrictions after. Minister, the signs are visible, yet it is unclear whether we are prepared to act in time. And also, Minister, opposing neocolonialism is not antisemitism. Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair and hon Mohammed, I'm not really sure what to say. There is one permanent residency application that has been granted in 2025. So, I don't know if the suggestion is that one person will colonise a country of 62 million. I think more broadly, though, we have been very clear that South Africa's number one problem is the

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unemployment rate in our country. If we don't address South Africa's 33% unemployment rate, we are sitting on a crisis and it is really all hands on deck. As I indicated in the first question, Chair, and again apologies for the duplication, Home Affairs is really serious about our role as an economic enabler.

South Africa is underperforming on various economic metrics and if we want to boost that, we have to attract investment on a wider scale. I think if we look at the developments across the world, that has gotten much harder than it was even a year ago. For that reason, I don't subscribe to the notion that South Africa should join the chorus of isolationism around the world. We are a small open economy that is deeply integrated into the rest of the world. I think if we play our role correctly, by implementing the necessary reforms to become an attractive destination for investment more generally, then I think we stand to benefit from that economically. Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr M M SOKOPO: I am trying to check, Minister, whether is there any preference given to citizens of other countries in

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acquiring permanent residence or citizenship in South Africa in particular including Israel? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, I think you would be hard pressed to argue that there is preference given in terms of permanent residency permits. If a country has gotten only 0,007% of all the permanent residency applications that have been granted, that is the share of public relations, PR, that have gone to the citizens of Israel in 2025, so far just one person. So, I think that this is just the simple and unsustainable notion.

I think more broadly the answer is very simple that everyone must comply with the same rules for permanent residency applications. The Home Affairs is working to make sure we bring less discretion. Actually, this is the key point, hon member, that we want less human discretion. We don't want a person to judge an application on the basis of what they think is right or some kind of subjective level based on what they want. We want to use technology to bring objectivity to that particular process.

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And again, as I said in the first question, that is where the electronic travel authorisation really is the future for us. Members will start seeing that in action within the next few weeks. Ultimately, if we can succeed in our goal to use technology to help us remove fraud, corruption and the kind of human discretion that could favour certain people over others, we will have a much more secure and an objective system. Thank you, Chair.

Mr M KHOZA: Minister, given the gravity of human rights violation perpetrated by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza and also considering the fact that South Africa has taken Israel to the International Court of Justice for the court to declare the actions of Israel to be genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, and more recently, considering that the United Nation has declared that Israel is engaged in an ethnic cleansing campaign in Gaza, are you aware, Minister, of any South African citizens who are members of the Israel Defence Force?

What is the position of your department of South Africans who are part of the Israel Defense Forces, IDF, and actively

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involved in the ethnic cleansing project of Israel against Palestinians in Gaza? Thank you very much, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, I am not aware of any such case but there are provisions within the Citizenship Act regarding this kind of issue. The important question usually revolves around whether people have dual citizenship or not. In other words, they are very clear provisions around statelessness and that deprivation of someone citizenship, for example, on the basis of engagements in conflicts on behalf of other states is judged on that basis as well. That is really a complex matter to look into but certainly there are provisions around these kinds of issues. Where we can meet the legal threshold we can obviously look into anyone that may be involved in contravention of any of South Africa's laws.

However, I do want to indicate to hon members that it is never quite as straightforward as it seems. I think it is important that as the Department of Home Affairs, there has been a real focus on reducing the costs of litigation and making sure that we abide by the rule of law in everything that we do. I think that is really where the guiding light for us would be.

Nevertheless, in terms of the specific question, no. If there

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are facts to the contrary we can always take a look. Thank you, Chair.

Mr W M THRING: Thank you, Chair. As we consider this question, I cannot but help conclude that it has a selective focus, with possible racist overtones and for possible nefarious reasons. The reason I say this is because we have not heard of similar parliamentary questions about nationals from China, Pakistan, Russia, Iran, Somalia or the USA, for example.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order, hon members.

Mr W M THRING: However, it must be noted that around the world racist anti-semitic attacks have increased exponentially. Not because those targeted have participated in the Israeli-Gaza conflict, but simply because they are Jews. Now, with that said, Minister, how does your department balance legitimate immigration oversight with South Africa's constitutional commitment to nondiscrimination, human ... [Interjections.] ... and the growth of our economy? Thank you. [Time expired.]

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, hon Thring for the question. I think the answer is similar to what I said earlier

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that it is the rule of law that ultimately has to guide any and all decisions. As tempting as it may be for people to try and weaponise immigration law for political purposes, we have been clear under the government of national unity, GNU, that we will not entertain anything like that.

So, I have to indicate you that it is quite ironic sometimes how from across the political spectrum people seek to use immigration law to pursue particular political outcomes. I often get requests from one side targeting the other and then from the other side targeting the one side trying to see if there is some way that they can get at a particular political opponent through the mechanisms of immigration and citizenship.

I want to assure the House that we do not entertain any of that, we regard our role as one anchored clearly in the Constitution and the rule of law. As I said, that is why we do not shy away from the complexities. These are often not straightforward cases as some people would like to claim. So, we try to bring that level of objectivity by anchoring our decisions in what the Constitution, the rule of law and legal advice would indicate.

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At the end of the day we want more objectivity, not less. I think that is where the focus on using advanced technology like machine learning and artificial intelligence, AI, will assist us in making sure that we stick to the facts of any particular case and ensure that there is absolutely no discrimination in terms of South Africa's immigration processes. Thank you, Chair.

Question 896:

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: House Chairperson and hon members, as part of the efforts to strengthen access to justice, I conducted oversight visits to various courts across the country. These visits included, amongst others, Tembisa, New Brighton, Palm Ridge, Kempton Park, Randburg and Polokwane High Court. I am grateful for the observations made during the course of the visits. The men and women who wake up daily to ensure that access to courts and access to justice is a lived experience for many million South Africans. This includes staff employed by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, Legal Aid SA, private attorneys and non-governmental organization, NGOs, and members of the judiciary who are working hard to ensure that the courts are

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working on a daily basis. We certainly value their commitments as this demonstrates a justice system which seeks to serve the public.

These visits identified several court-specific challenges. Positives that impact on service delivery and the efficient functioning of the court. Key issues include infrastructure challenges, safety and security, human resource capacity, tools and trade, and other operational matters which were observed. In some courts, there were no major issues identified, which includes the Randburg magistrate court, amongst others.

The other positive observations include the services offered by the small claims court, which often sits after hours. The small claim courts are vital to the millions of people seeking help on matters up to the value of R20 000. The process is simple and does not require legal representation, wherein the parties appear before a commissioner who would make ruling which is often quick in resolving matters speedily. We again thank the commissioners who are making themselves available without any remuneration and clerks who are at all times available in making this possible.

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Measures identified to deal with challenges include, amongst others, responding to the challenges of the ICT in terms of availability of records and also in the process of ensuring that we can be able to respond to the recording systems that are needed; safety and security - we have done a quantification across the country because we have recognized that this is now becoming a core competency that we have to do to protect our people who work within the justice system. And in partnership with the Minister of Police, we will be escalating in areas where there are still witnesses.

In infrastructure we have identified immediate needs which are things that need to be fixed. One of the areas that we are looking at is insourcing some of the people and getting people who can do basic things in terms of maintenance and then outsource for major issues. Thank you very much, House Chairperson.

Mr N T TSHOTETSI: Minister, I am glad that the observations that you have made are identical to the observations that we would have made as the component of Parliament - as the committee and individual members of Parliament - which would largely speak to the infrastructural problems that can be

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apportioned to the incompetency of Public Works. The question of the emails that are not always working, which can also be attributed to the problems of State Information Technology Agency, Sita, as well as the delayed implementation of the updated record systems of the court.

Now, what in your view, Minister, is the reasonable time frame that you think you would need as the department in order for you to adequately attend to all these issues as they are urgently needed to deliver services to the people of this country? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Firstly, in relation to infrastructure, we have had an engagement with Public Works, the Minister and the team. They have assured us that they have put together panels that will be able to turn around their performance in terms of implementation. And I am comfortable that this will be done in some of the areas where we have had courts being closed down on the basis that the buildings have been non-compliant. They have been able to work together with the Department of Labour to get them to work.

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With Sita, we have agreed and we welcome the initiative by the Minister, where they are also providing regulation so that they can be an opting out of Sita where there are challenges because some of the issues that we are experiencing are quite dire and do hamper on the availability of the service and also in terms of access to justice. So there are various mechanisms in partnership with the two departments that you have mentioned, hon member, that will be able to assist us.

Furthermore, the Minister of Finance also, because we had to deal with the matters of courts together with all other departments, where we were also meeting with the judiciary and with the President. Part of the issue is the financing of it. So the Minister of Finance has also committed to availing resources because when we looked at what court infrastructure needs, we currently have been allocated R400 million out of the R1,6 billion that is needed to be able to build new courts and also to be able to expand. We have not been able to build any new courts in the last five years because of resources. So those are being attended to. Thank you very much, hon member.

Adv G BREYTENBACH: Minister, as a result of these oversight visits, you must now be aware that there is a chronic shortage

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of qualified interpreters in the great majority of courts. What measures have you put in place to ensure that courts countrywide have sufficient interpreters to provide a proper service to ensure that court roles are not disrupted and that citizens have proper access to justice?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes, indeed, we had difficulties with the number of court interpreters. I can assure hon member that we are now working on a graduation ceremony in the coming few weeks where we will be graduating court interpreters that will assist us in filling up the vacancies. But more so as well, we are hoping that as we expand the work and we are working towards a single judiciary, we will be able to receive the resources because quite a number of these interpreters are actually temporary workers. They do not have permanent jobs within the justice system, whereas they are actually a critical component of us being able to deliver justice. When a court interpreter is not available at court, court proceedings can't proceed. Therefore, that adds to court backlog. We have been able to identify the numbers. We do believe that what we have currently, with those that are going to graduate in the coming three weeks that we are working on,

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we will be able to plug the gap that exists currently. Thank you, hon Breytenbach.

Mr S NOMVALO: Hon Minister, let me preface my question by saying that as the MK party, our view is that the small claims courts are not receiving adequate funding from the government, whereas predominantly they were designed to save the poor.

In your observation during your oversight would you agree with me if I say there is a need to give more financial support to small claims court in order to enhance their judicial capacity so that they can be able to adjudicate matters with credibility and integrity? Because the current status quo of allowing commissioners to act on voluntary basis is not ideal. Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you very much, hon Nomvalo. Yes, we agree that currently we do need to expand. The current model was to test whether this would be a viable model. Whether there will be many people who are utilizing them. And we found that they are quite popular. They are utilized and they assist in resolving dispute for the most vulnerable where people go to communities and take money

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and refuse to pay, for example. So yes, indeed, we are looking at mechanisms to be able to have commissioners who are full-time. That is why you would have seen the Deputy Minister across launching this course as part of expanding. Currently, there is a courtroom within the current system of the court, which we do think that it does assist because of accessibility, but also in terms of the staff complement. Like we are doing with the tribunal. We have committed ourselves to responding to the tribunal issues, to the small claim court, but also to the land claim court, because those are the current ones that we have to capacitate and expand there. So we do agree with you in terms of full-time capacity in those areas.

Xitsonga:

Tat S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu. Holobye, xivutiso xa mina ndzi xi kongomisa ka swivilelo swo tala leswi humaka eka tikhoto ta le hansi ta tihofisi ta ka majisitarata, laha vachuchisi va kumekaka va khome milandzu yo tala swinene. Mikarhi yin'wana milandzu leyi faneriweke hi ku aleriwa beyili a yi aleriwi, na leyi yi faneriwaka ku nyikiwa beyili a yi nyikiwi. Emakumu, hi kuma leswaku vabohiwa lava a va fanele va kumile beyili va tikuma va tlhelerisiwa ekhotsweni hikokwalaho ka xiyimo lexi vachuchisi va tikumaka va langutanile na xona.

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Ndzi lava ku tiva eka n'wina Holobye, xana mi endla yini ku antswisa xiyimo xa matirhelo ya vachuchisi va tikhoto ta le hansi leswaku va kota ku tirhela vaaki hi ku hetiseka, naswona ku kota ku khotsiwa ntsena swigevenga leswi endleke milandzu? Ndza khensa swinene, Mutshamaxitulu.

Xitsonga:

HOLOBYE WA SWA VULULAMI NA NHLUVUKISO WA VUMBIWA: Ndza khensa xivutiso xa muchaviseki. Ndzi rhandza ku hlamusela hi mukhuva lowu, vamajisitarata va tikhoto ta le hansi a hi vona va vonaka leswaku mubohiwa wa nyikiwa kumbe a nga nyikiwi beyili. Mulavisisi wa nandzu wo karhi hi ku tirhisana na muchuchisi hi vona va langutisisaka loko mubohiwa a fanele ku nyikiwa kumbe ku aleriwa beyili.

Loko hi languta nawu wa Criminal Procedure Act, i wa khale swinene, laha wu pfumelelaka na loyi a nga fanelangiki ku nyikiwa beyili a kumeka a nyikiwile. Hi leswi swi humelelaka. Xin'wana, va majisitarata vo tala i vo khomela. Leswi swi endla va nga koti ku va na vutihlamuleri lebyi hetisekeke. Van'wana loko va fanele va byarha vutihlamuleri eka swokarhi, hi kuma leswaku a va ha ri kona eka swiyimo swo khomela, va sukile. Hi

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le ku ringeteni leswaku vamajisitarata va tholiwa hi ku hetiseka ku nga ri vo khomela.

English:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Minister, please just hold on for a moment. Hon Mapfumari on the virtual platform, please, remain muted. Hon Minister, please, continue.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you.

Xitsonga:

Leswi swi vula leswaku a hi swikoti ku koxa vutihlamuleri eka vamajisitarata lavo khomela. Hikokwalahoke, hi tekile xiboho xa leswaku hi thola vamajisitarata va nkarhi hinkwawo vo ringana kwalomu ka 167 leswaku va ta endla ntirho lowu hetisekeke. Lava, loko va nga endli hi laha swi faneleke ha kona hi ta swi kota ku koxa vutihlamuleri eka vona. Ndza khensa.

Question 944:

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: My apologies, hon Chairperson. I thought I was unmuted. I am here. Thank you, hon Mohlala, for the question. The brutal killing of

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prosecutors is a heinous attack on the justice system and the rule of law and must be condemned by all law-abiding citizens. It undermines the fundamental principle of democracy and the administration of justice.

Prosecutors play a crucial role in upholding the law, seeking justice for victims and holding perpetrators accountable. The impact of such killings is far reaching. It erodes public trust in institutions of justice, intimidates legal professionals and potentially deters them from pursuing cases. Those responsible for these attacks must be held accountable.

I can confirm, hon member, that in the last five years, we have had five prosecutors who were shot and killed, namely Adv Vukile Gontana from Western Cape, Adv Sonwabo Booï from KwaZulu-Natal; Adv Ntsikelelo McAllister, Adv Elona Sombulula and Adv Tracy Brown, three of them from the Eastern Cape. Additionally, Adv Aaron Raletjena, who was based at the NPA head office, was brutally shot and killed at his home. May their souls continue to rest.

We are working around the clock to actually ensure that their families can find justice on all of their cases, and also, that

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we can be able to give comfort to the other areas. I must indicate that in the most recent incident relating to Miss Tracy Brown, two suspects were arrested and appeared in court. What was really worrying about this case is that the hit was allegedly ordered by an inmate in a local correctional centre that was related to a case she was handling. This is an intimidation on a prosecutor, but even in terms of the workers that are ...

We would continue to honour the courageous prosecutors who have done well. That is why NPA has erected a wall of remembrance at their headquarters in Pretoria, which was unveiled in 2023, where their families were invited and continue to play their part. We have also recently called on the media to play their role in protecting the identity of prosecutors when they appear before court in the advent of televised court proceedings in order to bring justice to people.

One of the unintended results is that prosecutors' faces and identities are shown while the faces of accused persons are hidden or protected from public view. Protecting the identity of prosecutors during a trial is important because it does ensure that we can be able to protect those prosecutors. This

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has been communicated to media, and many media houses are starting to respond positively.

The NPA, as well, has put together various mechanisms in place to protect prosecutors. One of them is Prosecutors Security Clause Protection Policy, where we feel that if there is a threat, then the prosecutor is protected. There is security co-ordination for high-risk and high-profile cases and awareness in all divisions, to sensitise the prosecutors on the available mechanisms for them to be able to work and raise alarm where they feel unprotected.

On case management database, we are working together with SA Police Service and other state security measures to be able to protect and identify risks in terms of the cases that prosecutors are dealing with. Thank you very much, hon member.

Ms T J MOKWELE: Chairperson, it is hon Mokwele on behalf of hon Mohlala. Minister, credible media reports confirmed the murder of two prosecutors that you just mentioned, Tracy Brown and Elona Sambulula. May their souls rest in peace. Recent report indicate that the killing of Tracy was planned from inside correctional facility by a released parolee, allegedly playing

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a central role. The Lusikisiki massacre is not the only massacre that was planned by incarcerated prisoners; there are more similar case.

Has your department, in co-ordination with the Correctional Services, SA Police Service and NPA intelligence structures convene a joint meeting, to investigate these claims, assess risk and implement preventive measures? If so, what concrete actions and outcomes have been achieved to curb this threat; and if not, why has your department failed to act, despite the clear danger to prosecutors, witnesses and the integrity of justice system?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Mokwele, I can indicate that following the issues that came up in relation to Tracy Brown, we did interact with the SA Police Service, together with the Minister and the MEC for Safety in the Eastern Cape. However, also, in terms of correctional services, we have requested that this be taken up.

I can confirm that you are working in a co-ordinated manner and confirm, hon Mokwele, that tomorrow, as JCPS cluster Ministers, we are having an outreach in Mthatha, in the Eastern Cape. This

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is also in line with what would have been identified as Wellington Prison being the heart of where contrabands are being found and also a source of major criminal activities within the Mthatha area.

Similarly, St Albans has been identified in the Gqeberha area as one of the critical prisons that continue to work. You would have actually seen the commissioner consistently, even on TV, appearing doing visits, and actually doing raids in prisons, together with the Minister. The Minister of Correctional Service has been leading a team to go into prisons, actually tightening matters up.

So, the JCPS is working in a co-ordinated manner, amongst us as political leaders, as Ministers, but also in terms of the technical teams within the JCPS cluster, working together to ensure that there are raids, and also working together to ensure that there is information sharing of where to go, what needs to be done and how it should be done. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you. Hon members, before I move on to recognise the next member to ask a supplementary question. May I just remind all members that we

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have Rule 64(d) in our Rule Book, which in essence says that when a member is speaking, other members are not to move between the Chair and that member or between the Table and that member. There are, of course, historical reasons. Maybe in old days it was seen as an act of aggression, but I think in our current circumstances, it is a basic courtesy that we do not obscure that member from the camera also.

It doesn't portray a very professional view to the public that is watching the proceedings if we pass between the member and the Chair because that ordinarily would mean that you also obscure the view of the members who is on the platform from the public viewing. So please, let us refrain from that and obey that specific Rule. The second supplementary question may be asked by the hon Lichfield Tshabalala.

Mr S NOMVALO: I am taking it on her behalf.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): You are welcome, hon member.

Mr S NOMVALO: House Chair, hon Minister, did any of the prosecutors were brutally murdered raise security concerns to any relevant authorities within the NPA? If yes, how did the

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NPA respond to ensure that they are safe? If not, how and why did it fail to make a security assessment and protect them if they were in danger?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Nomvalo, there were definitely no security concerns in the cases, when I asked, to all of them. You will remember, with the case of Adv Sombulula and Adv Tracy, that I personally went to the families, and I interacted with their colleagues to understand what could have occurred. At face value, initially, it wouldn't even have been clearer that it was actually a case related to their work. With Adv Sombulula, he was coming from work and was killed. Adv Tracy, as well, was with her partner and a child coming from work, when she was killed in the driveway.

So, initially, when these cases started to be investigated, they didn't come across as one of those that would have been a hit. It is only later, that it was clearer, especially with Adv Tracy, that indeed her death is linked to one of the cases that she was dealing with. The NPA had a strategic plan, and we had a conversation on how to determine high-risk profiles and what needs to be done.

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One of the issues expressed is that when you first get the docket in front of you, you would not be able to profile the individuals. It is only after some time, in various cases, that you will find that you can link a person to a gang or a member thereof, and all those things. Let us take in the example of Western Cape. In the Western Cape, we have high-profile cases of gang members, but when you look at the ... [Inaudible.] ... you don't have that because of the environment and knowing that we are dealing with these cases in the manner that we are dealing with.

Therefore, there are high security risk areas around the Western Cape in the cases that they are dealing with. However, what we have taken as a decision is that going forward, we will not just identify a court or an area with high risk, such as previously, with gang issues, but also commercial crimes that would put prosecutors in danger. We, therefore, deal with those. Sometimes, when you look at the cases that the individuals will be dealing with ... [Time expired.] ... are very minimum. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): The third supplementary question will be asked by the hon Mncwango.

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An HON MEMBER: House Chair, I am requesting to take it. Minister, what has been the impact of these killings of prosecutors on the cases they were responsible for?

Mr M A MNCWANGO: Welcome to the IFP.

An HON MEMBER: The GNU is disorganized!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): The question is being allocated to the IFP. Is there a question from the IFP?

Mr M A MNCWANGO: Yes, hon Chairperson. Hon Minister, arising from your response: What additional steps is the department taking in collaboration with the SA Police Service and the National Prosecuting Authority to strengthen intelligence gathering and early warning systems to prevent threats or attacks on prosecutors involved in high-profile cases?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, hon Mncwango. The work that we are doing or that is being done across, is done at provincial level and at district level. This is what we call case management. So, what happens is that the prosecutors, together with police, will sit and look at the

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cases that they have to deal with and therefore escalate it to the DPPs to be able to look at mechanisms that need to be put in place.

What we have agreed upon, between me and the SA Police Service, is that we are going to have to put more mechanisms, for example, proactive mechanisms, for identifying these cases so that we don't wait for a prosecutor or an investigator to indicate that they are dealing with a high-profile and, therefore, request for protection. In many cases it has been picked up early and prosecutors have been protected or provided with close protection as well as surveillance and assessment of the cases that they are dealing with. Thank you.

Mr W W WESSELS: Hon House Chairperson, I will handle the question with your permission.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): You are welcome, hon member.

Mr W W WESSELS: Through you, House Chair, to the hon Minister: I have noted the positive collaboration that you mentioned within the cluster to specifically address these safety concerns and issues. However, what is lacking is specific

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collaborations with regards to crime Intelligence, as the previous follow-up question also asked.

The question being: Is there specific collaboration, to not only identify the cases, but where there are high-level cases that are handled by prosecutors, in which crime intelligence is actively involved in providing intelligence to the National Prosecuting Authority with regards to risks? Is there such collaboration; and if not, why not?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Chairperson and hon member, when we say SA Police Service, we incorporate the DPCI because it falls under the SA Police Service. When we say SA Police Service and when I talk about the Minister, it is because the Minister is responsible for the whole portfolio. That is why when you refer to the NPA, you can't go and isolate the Asset Forfeiture Unit, AFU, in it, because there are quite various mechanisms that are put in place to be able to deal with issues of crime in a very systematic manner.

For example, if you are to deal with high crime levels, and take on the gangsters in the Western Cape, you must consider an

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intervention that will work better. You will have to have crime intelligence, the Asset Forfeiture Unit and all those people working together, to be able to indicate when you take off the assets, which are the proceeds of crime, depleting these people the ability to be able to fight you, as the state.

You would have to have the intelligence to understand when the cases are sitting, to even be advised which cases to physically take to court and which ones should not go to court but heard on virtual platform. So, there is quite a lot of work that is being done. It will be escalated as we deal with issues around protection, of not only prosecutors, but the entirety of staff that work within justice system.

Question 955:

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Thank you, hon Chair.

The answer is as follows: The National Commissioner appointed the Task Team to review the parole processes, which amongst others, will consider the following: Conducting a thorough review of the existing parole procedures and their alignment of applicable legislation, identifying operational inefficiencies and policy related bottlenecks affecting parole outcomes, recommending evidence-based constitutionality sound reforms and

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contributing to the development of a revised parole framework that promotes transparency, fairness and efficiency.

The department is also hosting a Summit on the Review Parole system from 22 to 23 September. The Summit will be attended by different stakeholders, for instance, Ministers and members of the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster, JCPS, academia, nonprofit organizations, community structures, victims, parolees, faith-based organizations, organized labour, gender and youth-based organizations and traditional leaders. In addition, the department, through its Research Directorate and subject matter experts, is conducting a baseline study on the state of the current parole system, which is anticipated to identify gaps and functional processes within the parole system.

In terms of the second part, monitoring and supervision of probationers, parolees, and awaiting trial person is a human capital-intensive activity. The day-to-day monitoring is enhanced through allocation of resources for physical monitoring, office consultations, telephone monitoring where applicable, community service and programme attendance. The monitoring category for every offender under the system of

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community corrections is determined by the predicted risk of offenders from high risk of minimum of eight contacts, medium risk of minimum of four contacts and low risk of minimum of two contacts. Parolees attend sitting either every six months, and frequently, depending on the length of their sentence, to review their status, behaviour, reclassify, or refer for intervention. The establishment of 219 officers, 57 satellite officers and service points for easy access of services contributes positively to the compliance with conditions to ensure visibility and strengthening of the monitoring system. Thank you.

Ms B E MACHI: Thank you, Chairperson. Hon Minister, while noting that the review of the parole system has commenced, what assurances you can provide that the process will address long-standing concerns of fairness, transparency and the rehabilitation in parole decisions. Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Thank you, hon Chair. That's why we have the Summit. The approach to the Summit is that we want to hear what the people say. We have people that will participate and making submissions so that we can see what the society of South Africa want to see that there will be more

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transparency, what the gaps are in the system and after that Summit, we will further forward it to the Task Team and there will be a process to ensure that we can do our utmost best to ensure more efficiency and more transparency. Thank you.

Ms K A RAMOLOBENG: Thank you so much, House Chair. Minister, what are some of the initiatives that you are targeting to maximize public participation in the reviewing process of the parole system, and this is outside the scheduled Summit that it's supposed to settle on Monday and Tuesday? So, what other alternatives or avenues are you intending to use outside the Summit itself but to enhance public participation? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Thank you, hon Ramolobeng. Firstly, I want to say that that will of course be integrated and will form part of the Task Team and the JCPS Cluster. Of course, from that we will see whether there should be amendments made to specific legislation. Let me say I am of the opinion that there will have to be amendments, not only to the Correctional Services Act, but also to the Criminal Procedures Act and of course, those people who are participating in that. In the end, it will also have to go, of course, to the portfolio committee, where the hon member is the

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chairperson of and there it is also for the public to see when we embark on amendments in terms of legislation the process is well known that it will be published and it will be asked for public comments. If we have to make further amendments and, in the end, when they are tabled in Parliament, it will go through the legislative process in terms of the portfolio committee, and we will also invite the public to comment on those amendments. So, we will ensure that that process will be followed quite for sure and dearly. Thank you.

Mr J ENGELBRICHT: Thank you, House Chair. Given the department's admission that the current parole system failed to prevent a violent reoffence by a high-risk murderer and the two-year timeline for the final review. What specific, immediate and verifiable measures beyond the mentioned quick wins have been implemented right now to ensure that no other parolee with a history of violent crimes poses a similar threat to the public, particularly in the monitoring of their day-to-day activities and compliance with conditions? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Thank you, hon Chair. The hon Engelbrecht, firstly, I can say that when I became the Minister, I had meetings with, for instance, the National

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Council of Correctional Services. Of course, I deal only with paroles or paroles in terms of lifers. I've set out what I think is the most important matter that must also be looked into, and that is the risk of reoffending. Let me say this to the hon member and to Members of Parliament, if we look at the statistics of 2024-25 in terms of reoffending of parolees, we had 373 parolees who again, reoffended in terms of robbery, 209 years and 303 for rape. So, this is a serious problem. It actually reflects on the rehabilitation processes. So, we are looking at that. But it is most important that people must not think that people are just putting on parole to address the overcrowding problem in correctional services. We have a constitutional obligation to protect the public. So, that's why we are looking more thoroughly in terms of the profiles of the applicants. I can also say to the hon member, I am in the process and legislation provides, for instance, for electronic bands that they must wear. It's very sophisticated these days. It can, for instance, monitor if a parolee, for instance, is using drugs or alcohol, which is of course a violation and then we have better monitoring.

Mr L G SHANGASE: Thank you, hon Chair. Hon Minister, it's given that the Minister previously stated in June that the review of

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the parole system had already commenced. So, hon Minister, can you explain why public and Parliament have seen little evidence of a meaningful change on the ground, particularly in light of ongoing reports and repeats offenders being released without proper monitoring and how often in reality are unannounced compliance check carried out since community remains unconvinced that these checks are effective or even happening? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Thank you, hon Chair. Hon member, firstly, I want to say that we must remember that the process for the revision of the parole system is actually coming from 2015. That's the Fifth Administration. We now in the 7th Administration. I said that I do hope that by next year this time, we will be in the final phase. It's a long-outstanding matter and we must address the issue.

In terms of unannounced visits and checks on parolees, I don't have the specific number now. But not long ago, at the beginning of last month, the National Commissioner specifically visited the Eastern Cape and made checks on the parolees. Quite a lot of them that contravene the parole conditions and of course the parole has been revoked. So, we are actively busy in

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the meantime to ensure that parolees comply with the conditions of their parole. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, the three hours allocated for questions today has expired. You will recall that last week during questions from Cluster 5: Economics, addressed to the Minister of Small Business Development and the Minister of Tourism took over in terms of Rule 144, subrule 2. These questions will be taken out of Cluster today in terms of Rule 138, subrule 5. Consequently, an additional 30 minutes will be added to today's question time for this purpose as provided for in terms of Rule 138, subrule 5, paragraph b.

Question 875:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr. C T Frolick): Hon members, the three hours allocated for questions today have expired. You will recall that last week during questions from Cluster 5 Economics, addressed to the Minister of Small Business Development and the Minister of Tourism stood over. In terms of Rule 144(2). These questions will be taken out of cluster today, "in terms of Rule 138(5)". Consequently, an additional

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30 minutes will be added to today's question time for this purpose as provided for in terms of Rule 138(5) (b).

I now take question 875, which has been asked by the hon KRJ Meshoe to the Minister of Small Business Development. The question is whether her department has put measures in place to ensure that the R500 million earmarked for the Spaza Shop Support Fund will go towards assisting local spaza shop owners, who reportedly run just 20% of all spaza shops currently operating in the Republic, with the rest being owned and or run by foreign nationals who are often better trained and experienced business owners? If not, why not; If so, what measures are in place to ensure that South African spaza shop owners will benefit from the specified fund, and whether there are any programmes in place specifically designed to help better equip and train local spaza shop owners? If not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much, House Chairperson, and thank you for the question from hon Meshoe. Let me state what we have been saying, including in the press conference and the advert itself. We did say that the fund is meant only for South African-owned spaza shops. We've

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further indicated that the registration will happen at the local level as we know that the Business Licensing Act entrusts those responsibilities with the municipalities.

So, there is a stage wherein they must register and get the permit from the municipality. Following that we make sure that we provide training programmes working with the Wholesale and Retail Seta, in order to make sure that they are trained in terms of how to run a spaza shop as the business. Whilst we are also working with NEF, that continues to check in terms of their compliance in relation to infrastructure needs that they would have applied for or there in short of.

So, we do have our agency Sedfa and the department, including NEF that make sure that they go pre to provide verification, because it is important to verify that this spaza shop that is registered under Stella Ndabeni, indeed it is run by Stella Ndabeni, and I must report, hon members that we've discovered that so many South Africans are fronting for non-South Africans, especially undocumented ones. This is why we had to be tighter on the on the regulations that we put in place and then we had to make sure that thoroughly we provide

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verification working with those that are responsible for compliance at local level.

So, we do provide all of that, once then one is approved and verified by all those parties from local district, province and National Department. We will then be able to say now we can then approve for financing in terms of the stock as Sedfa is responsible for stock provision and training and any for infrastructure. So, yes, there are measures in place, and we do provide verifications, and we are certain that we are not going to spend the money if it is not South African-owned spaza shops that are registered. Thank you, House Chairperson.

Rev R K J MESHOE: Thank you, Chairperson, and thank hon Minister, for that reply. We know that South Africa is plagued by corruption and as a result, most people want to ensure that the money, this fund, that we are all happy about will go to where it is needed the most. I want to know whether there has been consultation with South African spaza shop owners to find out from them what their real needs are? When there is competition between the foreign nationals who operate spaza shops and the locals, foreign nationals always do better because where they come from, they have been properly trained

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and some of them worked in the shops with their parents. So, they learnt first-hand from their fathers how to run a small business, something that is not happening in South Africa because we were told in the new democracy that children must not do any work, which has put our children at a disadvantage. Now the South African Spaza and Tuckshop Association has called for accountability in the distribution of support.

Now what I want to know from you, hon Minister, how transparent is the process going to be? Because if we are told that 20% of South Africans comprise those that are running spaza shops only 20% now. Are we going to be given the details of where those 20% are and how that money allocated to them is going to be spent according to your department? Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you so much once more hon member. Yes, as I indicated, we are working with local municipalities, not only in terms of government. We're working with the House of Traditional Leaders because some of the spaza shops are in the rural areas. We are working with the business associations that are also doing great work in terms of empowering their own members. We were talking about

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different associations that we are working with in their respective local municipalities. As I said, they've been conducting workshops on their own. They've partnered with big business. They've partnered with other Setas because they also have an interest in ensuring that this fund does serve the intended beneficiaries which are South Africans.

Yes, it is true that most South Africans don't know how to run spaza shops. That is true, hence, we talk about 20%. But the reason they cite is that there's high levels of crime in the areas where they're operating from. But also at times, it takes too long to get a permit even when they want to be compliant as spaza shop owners. This is the reason we said we are working closely with the Department of Cogta. We are working closely with the Department of Economic Development in their respective provinces so that they too can assist us in dealing with those. We've experienced challenges, for example, even now where in certain municipalities insist on providing licences, and we are asking them to say, can you just issue a permit, so that they can be able to run the business because ours is not to take South African owned spaza shops out of the business. Ours is to help them with the compliance but also help them leverage bulk-stock buying, which is where the nonSouth Africans are beating

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them, because they work as the group. They are organised groupings, they are doing stokvels, they know how to negotiate discounts. And now we've also engaged our own South Africans to say. If we are going to support you, you've got to agree that you are going to participate in the bulk-buying scheme that we are providing because we are doing that so that we can get discounts for them.

Ms S M PETERS: Thank you, Chairperson, with foreign nationals owned spaza shops selling expired goods and counterfeit goods to our communities, what measures has the Minister put in place to ensure that the funds go to legitimate spaza shop owners? As we find that local citizens apply on behalf of foreign nationals, will the Minister, in conjunction with the Department of Home Affairs, be able to visit these spaza shops to ensure that it is actually locals that own them? As well as what additional programmes or initiatives have the department introduced to ensure that South Africa's spaza shop owners not only benefit fully from the R500 million spaza shops support fund, but are also equipped with the skills, resources and support systems needed to sustain their business in the long term and reduce the risk of failure? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, House Chairperson, as we reported to Parliament that nationally, we have been working with the net joints. In the provinces, there's the provincial joint and at the district level, there's the district joints, which encompasses all the stakeholders that have everything to do with compliance and monitoring of spaza shops in the areas. So yes, we've been conducting raids in certain areas, and we do that because we want to ensure that if Stella trading is registered indeed, it is run by Stella. That's why earlier, when I was responding to hon Meshoe, I indicated that we've even gone to work with traditional leaders to say please be our eyes and ears. Let's identify the people who are shooting the system. So, there is monitoring that is done and that is in place. There is stakeholder involvement and that's improving ways of ensuring that there's compliance.

However, we urge hon members in their respective constituencies to raise awareness to their constituency members about the criminality of them fronting for nonSouth Africans as we know that the Immigration Act is very clear on this. But without just saying we are penalising, we're also saying we're working hand in hand with the involved stakeholders so that we're able to assist those that have been verified that indeed they are

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true spaza shop owners and this will do again with business associations, with spaza shop owners themselves and the locals that they're operating in.

Mrs N L HLAZO-WEBSTER: Thank you very much, House Chairperson. The question is with regard to empowerment. We know that the fund is set to target local owners, but also that there's an empowerment imperative. So, part of South Africa's empowerment policy does include youth and women. So, the question is: Of the registered spaza shops, how many are owned by Black women? How many are owned by youth and what is particularly the method or how are you ring-fencing to ensure that black women and young people are well represented and are targeted and prioritised with this fund?

The MINISTER OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Thank you, House Chairperson, I'll say I would have to provide a written answer to provide the details as the numbers continue to increase every day. I don't want to come here and say 20% or five businesses. So, hon member, please accept that I will provide a written response in that order to give you the breakdown that you are looking for.

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Mr S M GANA: Chairperson, there's the last supplementary question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, what are you referring to?

Mr S M GANA: The last supplementary question by hon Zibi on this question.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr. C T Frolick): No, not according to our records, hon member. According to our records, your party was not identified as one of those to put the supplementary question, and that's why I'm proceeding to Question 811.

Question 811:

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Hon Chairperson, greetings and greetings to the hon members. Hon Chairperson, I wrote to the Speaker of the National Assembly and the chairperson of the portfolio committee on the 9th of September this year. And the issue that I raised with the hon Speaker and portfolio committee chair relates to Rule 89 of the Rules of the National Assembly, specifically records that no member may reflect upon

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the merits of any matter on which a judicial decision in a court of law is pending. In other words, the sub judice rule.

I further mentioned in my letter that we are hereby informed that on the 4th of September 2023, seven of the former board members of the SA Tourism Board instituted an urgent application against me the interim board in the North Gauteng High Court Division of the High Court for the reinstatement of the former SA Tourism Board.

Hon Chairperson, I have already lodged my formal intention to oppose the urgent application, and the matter is therefore pending before a court of law. In view of the above, I suggest, and I herewith inform you that the sub judice principle applies in this matter. I thank you, hon Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister, the gist of the question refers to the matter that the matter will be resolved in the best interest of South Africans. I checked on this question before I came into the House and it is our opinion that you may reply to the question without going into any details but also indicate to you that according to our legal advice, the matter is not sub judice because the matter

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was not heard yet in court and there is no judicial decision pending on the matter.

You do not need to go into all the details of the papers that you filed but you may proceed to reflect on the gist of the question on the matter being resolved in the best interest of all South Africans.

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Hon Chairperson, I will do so. On the 28th of August, the interim board was briefed by the legal team of SA Tourism, SAT to urgently look at the chief executive officer, CEO's suspension and the implementation of the forensic reports and recommendations in the report and deal with it using proper governance protocols.

Hon Chairperson, the Department of Tourism is committed to upholding the rule of law and ensuring that all actions taken by SAT are within the bounds of the Tourism Act. The dissolution of the former board was a necessary step to restore lawful governance and accountability.

Hon Chairperson, on the 22nd of August 2025, I appointed an interim board to collectively and in a transparent manner and

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in the public interest to deal with this matter. So, the board is currently actively addressing governance lapses and restoring the institutional integrity of the South African Tourism Board because South African Tourism continues to play a vital role in promoting tourism, driving economic growth and creating jobs.

As the Department of Tourism, we remain committed and focused in advancing initiatives to support these objectives while we also reaffirm our commitment to transparency, accountability and the protection of public resources. The department will continue to engage Parliament and the public on developments and ensure that the outcome of this matter reflects the best interests of all South Africans. I thank you, hon Chair.

Ms T SOKANYILE: Here's the question to the Minister. How is governance and financial controls to be restored in SA Tourism to ensure its optimal performance to enhance tourism to the country and how will this be practically achieved? Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister I suggest that you switch off your video so that we can hear you clearer.

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The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Hon Chairperson, I wish to bring to the attention of the hon members that in April of 2025, in my quarterly meetings with the Auditor-General, the Auditor-General raised two outstanding issues in the SA Tourism administration. The one is the failure to appoint a full-time chief financial officer and the failure to appoint a head of internal audit in the organisation.

I raised these issues from the Auditor-General in June and in July with the now dissolved board to say to them that the Auditor-General needs a report about where we are with the appointment of a chief financial officer and a head of internal audit. As we speak, hon Chair, there is still no chief financial officer, there's still no head of internal audit. The board that I've appointed in the interim have reviewed the processes followed and they will very soon make an announcement on the appointment of a chief financial officer and the head of internal audit. So that is what we have done in the meantime, hon Chairperson.

Ms H ISMAIL: Minister, when you appeared before the portfolio committee, you said that SA Tourism's operations would not be jeopardised by the dissolution of the board you suspended. You

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said they had a meeting, they said they had a round-robin and they actually implemented the human resource, HR recommendation of consequence management due to the R4,1 million in irregular expenditure against the CEO. Now, Minister, you emphasised that the tourism industry still had faith in you.

But we know that the Tourism Business Council has now decided to withhold Tourism Levy South Africa, Tomsa levy worth at least half a billion rand from SAT. This is totally due to poor performance and a negative track record of mismanagement. Do you still think that dissolving the SAT board is the right decision? And do you still think that the tourism industry still has faith in you?

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Yes, indeed, I want to assure the hon members that there's absolutely no crisis in tourism. Where I'm sitting tonight and addressing this hon House, I'm with the Tourism Business Council at their leadership conference. The Tourism Business Council have in a letter written to me given their full support to the Department of Tourism to continue to work together to focus on the Tourism Growth Partnership Plan that we have all adopted.

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We have already had our first Execution Lab Implementation Programme. The Chairperson of the Tourism Business Council is busy looking into the matter of the withheld Tomsa levy and I asked for a report about what exactly happened there.

But I can assure the hon member Ismail that the tourism sector has got full confidence in working with the Department of Tourism to further grow the sector and to further grow our economy and to further create jobs in our country. I thank you, hon Chairperson.

Ms N BUTHELEZI: Hon Chairperson, the hon Buthelezi coming in for the hon Moodley. The Minister has been failing to take accountability ever since this matter was brought forward into the committee, so this is not new to us as the committee of tourism. However, my question will be, Minister, the public contradictions between you and the SAT Board on the handling of misconduct allegations raise serious concerns about your department's capacity to exercise effective oversight and ensure governance stability within SAT.

With the entity already flagged by the Auditor-General for irregular expenditure exceeding R1,2 billion in the year of

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2024-25 and ongoing instability threatening critical tourism growth initiatives, how will you prevent this leadership crisis from degenerating into full institutional paralysis that undermines service delivery, public trust and the sector's recovery as the key driver of jobs and economic growth? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Hon Chairperson, thank you to the hon Buthelezi for the question. I have said earlier on that, yes, if they are perceived or differences in terms of interpretation of the Tourism Act, that is why the matter is sub judice and the court will decide on what is the right interpretation.

I will not go there. I am always willing, prepared and able and committed to be held accountable by Parliament. Parliament is there to hold the example. And hon Chairperson, I will never shrink that responsibility.

The 2024-2025 financial report will be presented to Parliament and all of the alleged irregularities or misspent or whatever will be explained to Parliament. I know that the portfolio committee normally calls us to give not only comment on our annual report, but also on our auditor statements from the

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Auditor-General. And I look forward to bringing the SAT Board with myself to the committee to discuss the full report with the committee. I thank you

Ms B K DIALE: Thank you, hon Chair, hon Diale will be taking that on behalf of the hon Tito. Minister, you have indicated that there is no deep crisis between yourself and the tourism department. However, according to our observations, especially because you just said the matter is sub judice, it's an indication of deep contradictions between yourself and them.

Does the Minister agree that the current contradictions between yourself or your department and the SAT Board exposes deep governance failures? And will you support the legislative amendments to strengthen oversight and accountability in entities that are under your department? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF TOURISM: Thank you, hon member for the question. Maybe I need to qualify contradictions. As far as I am concerned, the law matters. The Tourism Act matters. Every cent that we spend of taxpayers' money in this country matters. And therefore, the contradictions will be finally adjudicated by an independent court of law that will then,

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before we judge who is contradicting the other, if there are different interpretations of the law, we must leave it to the independence of our judiciary to interpret and make that ruling.

That's why I was very happy when the dissolved board decided to go to court, because that is where you will get judgment and adjudication by a competent judge to pronounce on the matter.

I look forward to the judgment. I look forward that whatever the court rules, at the end of the day, we will all be bound by that decision and we will all have to implement the judgment of the court. I thank you, hon Chairperson.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, the time allocated for questions has expired. Outstanding replies received will be printed in Hansard.

I request members to stand and wait for the Presiding Officer and the Mace to leave the Chamber. That concludes the business for the day, and the House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 18:37.