**THE PRESIDENCY: REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**Question : 3853**

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**Mr M G P Lekota (Cope) to ask the President of the Republic:**

(1)     Whether he intends to initiate a scientific investigation(s) to ascertain (a) why South Africans are prone to arson, vandalism and violence when they participate in protest action and (b) what the different spheres of Government need to do to alleviate the anger of the South African population and therefore curb the destruction related to protest actions; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(2)     Whether he will make a statement on how the Government is planning to prevent and discourage protesters from routinely resorting to arson, vandalism and violence during a protest action?                                                          NW4663E

REPLY:

1. The widespread incidents of violence and destruction of property during protests is a cause for major concern. I have spoken about this matter many times in public platforms. The violence in our society is inherited from the violence perpetrated during the apartheid system and the violence response it engendered.

There are studies that have been undertaken to understand factors that contribute to a culture of violence in our society. Some of the studies have been undertaken by organisations outside government. Others have been commissioned by government itself. For instance, a few years ago the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster contracted the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation to undertake research on the violent nature of crime in South Africa.

The critical step that we need to take is not so much to commission more studies because there is already some research that has been undertaken. What is important is taking steps to turn the tide against violent protests and the destruction of property.

1. There are various important initiatives government will implement to address the matter next year. These include educating society about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This education campaign about rights and responsibilities of citizenship is important considering that next year (2016) will be the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the Republic by former President Nelson Mandela. It will also be the 40th anniversary of 16 June 1976 student uprisings.

Studies show that violence in our society affects mostly women and children. Government will use the year 2016, which is the 60th anniversary of the Women’s March to the Union Buildings to mobilise society against violence that is committed against women and children.

Other measures will be announced in due course.