**FURTHER CONSULTATION NECESSARY TO TIGHTEN TERMS OF REFERENCE**

To avoid the perennial perception of toothless inquiries, the Portfolio Committee on Police has decided to take time to consider the founding terms of reference (ToR) of the inquiry into the violence, looting and destruction of property that occurred mainly in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.

The committee received the first draft of the ToR and resolved that it was necessary to give Members of Parliament some time to reflect and consult on the draft to ensure a solid framework for the inquiry. “We are steadfast that this process should not be a tick-box exercise, but a thorough process of accountability. It is on this basis that we want to ensure that our work is legally sound, guided by the rules of Parliament and is meaningful in ensuring prevention of similar acts in future,” said the committee Chairperson, Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson.

At the heart of the decision to defer the adoption of the ToR is the need to ensure clarity and a process that is legally sound and can withstand scrutiny. One such item requiring clarity relates to the intelligence services, in the context of a similar process being undertaken by the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence.

As a result, the committee resolved to defer the adoption of the ToR by two weeks. In the intervening period, the members of the committee will make recommendations to the Chairperson on how to strengthen and clarify the ToR. After the two weeks have elapsed, the committee will have an opportunity to consider an almost complete product.

“We remain committed in our resolve to understand what led to lapses within the security establishment and what accountability mechanisms have been implemented. We also do not want to see a recurrence of the violence and looting that resulted in the loss of life and economic activity, and we are hopeful that this process will be a deterrent for such acts from reoccurring,” Ms Joemat-Pettersson emphasised.

As part of the inquiry process, the committee will undertake an oversight visit to KwaZulu-Natal primarily to visit violence affected sites and to interact with residents, police and all relevant stakeholders.

**Malatswa Molepo**
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