**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE CONCERNED ABOUT TURNAROUND TIME IN PROSECUTING CORRUPTION CASES**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 27 November 2018 –** The Portfolio Committee on Police has underlined its concerns over the turnaround time in prosecuting the bulk of corruption cases on its table. The committee today received a number of reports which included progress on finalising of high-profile cases.

“During the meeting with the former National Director of Public of Public Prosecutions as well as the Acting Head of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI), the committee highlighted then the need for urgency in dealing with corruption and as well as serious commercial crime investigations. It is unacceptable that some cases are still not prosecuted for up to eight years since initial reporting,” said Mr Francois Beukman, the Chairperson of the committee.

While the committee is well aware that some of these cases are complex and require time to attain the necessary information, it is nonetheless of the view that for justice to be upheld and to be seen to being upheld, it is only fair that prosecution is done within a reasonable timeframe.

As a result, the committee has resolved to invite the executive authority of the Department of Justice and Correctional Services as well as the Ministry of Police to ascertain and remove blockages that hamper timely prosecutions. An efficiently working criminal justice system is necessary to deal with criminality and restore South Africa’s economic growth trajectory that fosters an enabling environment for job creation.

The seamless integration and working together of institutions within the Security Cluster is of paramount importance if the fight against crime is to succeed. The committee welcomes the assurance that the working relationship between the NDA and DPCI is functioning currently.

The committee has also raised concerns around the decline of workforce of investigators within the DPCI which has been identified as one of the contributing factors leading to delays in investigating and prosecuting accused persons. While attrition is a normal process, the committee has emphasised the need for urgent intervention and implementation of the human resource plan by the South African Police Service (SAPS) and DPCI’s management team. “The DPCI must always be well-resourced to effectively deliver on its important mandate,” Mr Beukman emphasised.

Meanwhile, the committee welcomed progress in relation to financial lifestyle audits assessments already implemented by the SAPS. The committee welcomes the fact that of the 9 972 members subjected to financial lifestyle assessments, 99.15% of members have no adverse findings.

The committee has called for the speedy finalisation of further assessment of the 0.85% of members who have been flagged for further validation to determine the veracity of the findings. Also important is the finalisation of the all phases of the audit project, with the sole aim of ensuring the integrity of the service.

The committee also welcomes the progress in vetting officers, especially in senior management and procurement divisions. The committee remains of the view that integrity within the senior management structure of the SAPS is necessary to ensure leadership by example. “A police service with integrity is necessary if the service is to regain the confidence by citizens and investors in the ability to deal with crime,’ Mr Beukman emphasised.

Despite this the committee raised its apprehension on the 124 senior management officers that have not applied for vetting. The committee has called for complete vetting of senior managers and over time all police officers that enter the system.

The committee will await a continuous update on the vetting and lifestyle audit process.

The committee is satisfied by the presented plan for a safer festive season presented by the Saps. Of importance is the reliance on a multi-disciplinary approach as well as preventative interventions.  The committee has highlighted that there is a need to deal with proliferation of firearms, liquor and drugs if the interventions are to be successful.

A major pillar of the strategy which must be strengthened is the intervention to enforce road safety through the arrest of drunken driving, speeding and removal of unroadworthy vehicles from our roads. “The Saps must work in collaboration with the municipal traffic officials to increase visibility which will hopefully reduce the carnages on our roads,” Mr Beukman said.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON POLICE, MR FRANCOIS BEUKMAN**