**African Christian Democratic Party**

 **24 May 2022

ACDP Parliament
Budget Vote 28, 24 & 21: Police, IPID, Civilian Secretariat
Speech by ACDP President, Rev Kenneth Meshoe MP**

 **ACDP leader says budget constraints not the only challenge facing SAPS**

“House Chairperson,

The ACDP is very concerned about the increase in mass shootings in the country, the kidnapping of children, the proliferation of drugs in the country, particularly in the vicinity of schools. It breaks our hearts to see the increase of school children who drop out of schools because of drug addiction. The police must do more to find and arrest drug dealers who are destroying the future of our future leaders.

This financial year, the SAPS budget has decreased in real terms by 4,1%. The budgets for the strategic programme of Visible Policing and the essential sub-programme of Forensic Science Laboratories were also decreased.

Sadly chairperson, budget constraints are not the only challenges facing SAPS staff. The Men and Women in Blue also need to be reassured that they have the support of the top structures in the execution of their duties. They need to feel that their employer cares about their wellbeing and that promotion is possible if they are honest and diligent.

Right now, the morale of SAPS staff is very low. Their current working conditions make it very difficult for them to maintain public order; protect and secure the inhabitants of South Africa and their property, to enforce the law as required by the SA Police Service Act.

According to a survey SAPS did on the morale of its staff in 2021, the organisation is very poor at communicating changes that affect employees. Top management have also been known to disagree openly.

Our police really are understaffed. According to the Expert Panel report, “the strength of the South African Police Service is a mere 180 000 for a population of some 60 million people.” This financial year, funding is only enough to provide for an additional 12 000 entry-level members; and, unfortunately, 10 000 of these new recruits will simply be replacing former staff members now lost to SAPS for various reasons. So, there will only be 2000 new staff members, actually.

The ACDP is also concerned about SAPS-owned firearms that are reported as stolen or lost. We all know that not all police officers are honest. So, the target to reduce lost and stolen firearms to 600 in the upcoming year is ridiculously low. If our officers cannot safeguard their weapons, how can they be trusted to protect South Africans?

In conclusion, the ACDP would like to bring to the attention of this House the condition of the SAPS Education Trust. The purpose of this trust is to educate the children of police officers who died in the line of duty. Government has to ensure that this SAPS Education Trust does not collapse as the Minister raised his concern about such a possibility. The least government can do for the families of police officers who lost their lives while protecting us, is to pay the school fees of the orphans they have left behind.

Regarding the fight against gender-based violence the ACDP is relieved to that the DNA backlog has been reduced from 210 000 exhibits in April 2021 to about 58 000, and trust that the target of not allowing the backlog to exceed 10% of registered case exhibits will be met. Media reports, though, continue to speak of the large backlog; because ultimately, it is DNA evidence that will win the war on GBV, by convicting the perpetrators.

We also welcome the commitment to establish GBV desks at all police stations in phases, but would like to remind SAPS that this will not help rape victims unless the rapists in blue uniforms who are based in these police stations are also dealt with decisively.

I thank you.”