**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**DEFENCE COMMITTEE RESOLVES TO HAVE IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS ON CHALLENGES CRIPPLING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 27 May 2020 –** The Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans has resolved to postpone its discussions on the human resource and (force) rejuvenation plans presented by the Department of Defence today.

The committee is concerned that the Defence Force is fast losing its capabilities, owing to successive budget cuts that have also impacted on its defence material acquisition programmes, with the resultant knock-on effect on the defence industry. The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Cyril Xaba, said: “With the Defence Force in a state of decline, the country is losing its sovereign capability, something that will take many years to rebuild.”

The committee will, in the next few weeks, have in-depth discussions with the department on these challenges to save the Defence Force from collapse.

The committee also today adopted its report on the Department of Military Veterans’ Budget Vote (Budget Votes 26). Over the past few weeks, the committee has raised its concerns about the strategic leadership, systemic and structural challenges in the Department of Military Veterans. In response to this, the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Mr Thabang Makwetla, has in a meeting on Friday, 22 May 2020, undertaken to address the concerns raised by the committee.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS, MR CYRIL XABA.**