**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**BUDGET FOR THE APPEALS BOARD OF THE DMV SHOULD BE RING-FENCED**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 24 June 2020 –**The budget for the Appeals Board of the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) should be ring-fenced, the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans said today.

Briefing the committee on the mandate, challenges and achievements, a member of the board, Ms Nomsa Dlamini, told the committee that budgetary constraints have impacted not only on the work of the board, but its ability to inform military veterans of the board’s existence and the appeal option available to them should they not find satisfaction in the decisions taken by the DMV.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Cyril Xaba, said the regulations to the Military Veterans Act No. 18 of 2011, which have not yet been promulgated, will be able to give direction to some of the grey areas within the entity. This includes issues related to budget, its terms of reference, and the rules guiding the entity. The promulgation, he said, is something that needs to be attended to with urgency.

The committee is of the view that the budget for the appeals board is to be ring-fenced, albeit the responsibility thereof should remain with the Accounting Officer of the DMV. Not ignoring the funding challenges of the DMV, Mr Xaba asked the department to make an allowance for the ring-fenced funding in its adjustment budget.

In response to the entity’s challenge relating to tools of trade, the Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Thabang Makwetla, was asked to facilitate engagements between the department and the entity to ensure that an assessment is done on how much the department can afford for the identified tools of trade.

The board highlighted its capacity constraints and the lack of cooperation from the department, which often results in the board having to make default judgements. Mr Xaba said adequate support must be provided to enable the board to perform its statutory obligations. The department was thus instructed to look at the capacity challenges and assigning a dedicated official. The department was asked to include in its performance targets the support provided to its entities.

The committee notes that the board does not have the capacity and resources for extensive roadshows to inform military veterans of its existence. In this regard, the committee believes that military veterans should be informed of the option to appeal the outcomes of their grievances to the department.

While thanking the board members for their commitment and diligence given the disconcerting circumstances, the committee said the process of appointing the new board should have been started, since the term of the current board expires at the end of June. The committee will monitor the progress made by the department and the office of the Deputy Minister in implementing its instructions.

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