**DELAY IN CONCLUDING INVESTIGATION INTO IRREGULAR EOH CONTRACT AIDING CORRUPTION**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 25 August 2020 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs was unanimously critical of the delay in concluding an investigation into the missing master files in the automated biometric identification system (Abis) contract with the EOH company. The conclusion of the investigation is integral for effective consequence management and is crucial if the state is to win the fight against corruption.

“We find the delay unfortunate in the context that the committee had made recommendations for the urgent conclusion of the matter. The fact that the Department of Home Affairs has only in May 2020 appointed SAB&T audit firm to investigate the entire tender process is unsatisfactory in the context that it will delay the conclusion of the investigation and perpetuate irregular expenditure around the contract,” said Advocate Bongani Bongo, the Chairperson of the committee.

The committee believes that it has been accommodating to both the State Information Technology Agency (Sita) and the department on the matter with assurance that the investigation would be concluded. “We are in agreement that the matter must be dealt with urgently and those that are found to be in the wrong are brought to book,” Adv Bongo emphasised.

It is also concerning that Sita, the state’s custodian for technology, could misplace an entire master file. This leads to erosion of legitimacy of an important agency within government. While the committee welcomes the reform of control measures of its supply chain management, the committee’s patience for the conclusion of this matter has lapsed.

As a result, the committee resolved that the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies and Sita must give the committee clear progress in finalising the matter by the first week of October 2020. Furthermore, the committee has called for an enhanced collaboration between the Department of Home Affairs and Department of Communications and Digital Technologies in finalising the investigation.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, ADVOCATE BONGANI BONGO**