**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE CONCERNED ABOUT THE CONFLICT IN CABO DELGADO**

**Parliament, Thursday, 3 September 2020**– The Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation was briefed on the security situation in Cabo Delgado, Northern Mozambique, and its impact on South Africa’s foreign policy aspirations for a secure and peaceful Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Tandi Mahambehlala, commented that “this conflict has brought home a reality that we are not immune from conflict in our neighbourhood and across the region”.

“As a committee responsible for International Relations, we wanted the department to explain what the implications of this conflict would be in our neighbourhood and region; and most importantly, how our diplomacy is utilised to mitigate the escalation of the conflict before it spreads all over the region,” continued Ms Mahambehlala.

The department highlighted the sensitive nature of the conflict and that South Africa, as member of SADC, is prepared to work closely with the regional body in response to the conflict.

It was reiterated that the SADC approach is that Mozambique should draw a roadmap, detailing the type of assistance it will require from SADC, and all members of SADC will accordingly see where and how they can help.

The committee expressed support to the approach taken by the department and the government of South Africa.

It stressed the importance of acting within the collective of SADC, and for the country to move in unison with the region and the continent in addressing this matter.

The Committee alluded to the fact that this armed conflict, has indeed brought about an unusual character within SADC.

Ms Mahambehlala saw the emerging threat in Mozambique as a matter of great concern and also a threat to the SADC region.

“The conflict brought about insecurity in the region, which has thus far been considered as a beacon of peace and stability in the continent”, said Ms Mahambehlala.

**ISSUED BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION, MS TANDI MAHAMBEHLALA.**