**Report to the Subcommittee on the Review of Assembly Rules on the removal of Ms H Mkhaliphi from the hybrid sitting of the Assembly on 29 July 2020**

1. **Background**
2. During the consideration of Vote 9: Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation on 29 July 202, I was chairing the proceedings. After the question had been put, a division was called. I inadvertently said the bells would be rung for 15 minutes. However, I immediately corrected myself. Some members on the virtual platform unmuted themselves and by way of interjections joked about the incident.
3. Following the member’s interjections, Mr S Swart MP rose on a point of order and pleaded with me to enforce the previous rulings from the Chair and the Rules that members should refrain from interjecting whilst on the virtual platform as it drowns members on the floor.
4. Ms N Mazzone, the Chief Whip of the Opposition, rose on a similar point when a member unmuted his microphone on the virtual platform and interjected.
5. After those requests, I undertook to enforce the previous rulings made from the Chair and the Rules with regard to member’s interjection whilst on the virtual platform, and I had therefore put the members on warning should they disregard them.
6. Later in the proceedings, Ms Mazzone called for a division on Vote 10: Public Enterprises, and I called for the bells to be rung for 15 seconds. Ms Mkhaliphi immediately said “Usuyayibambe ke manje hayi u 15 minutes lo ongene ngawo …” [*You got it right now, forget the issue of the 15 minutes you spoke about when first got here*)
7. This was the third time that Ms Mkhaliphi was interjectings whilst I was in the Chair. And it was at this moment that I ordered the Serjeant-at-Arms to mute and remove her from the virtual sitting.
8. **Comment and conclusion**
9. While members are permitted to interject in the Chamber whilst a member is on the floor, their microphones are switched off and they generally do not drown out the member speaking. On the virtual platform, hoverer, this is not the case as members have to unmute themselves in order to interject. In so doing, they drown out the member speaking.
10. Presiding officers have repeatedly asked members on the virtual platform to desist from interjecting. On that day, the presiding officers who had chaired before me had made similar requests.
11. In her letter to the Speaker, Ms Mkhaliphi seeks to make light of her conduct by stating that her interjection was intended as a joke in response to me mistakenly stating that the bells would be rung for 15 minutes, instead of 15 seconds.
12. The order that she be removed from the virtual sitting had nothing to with the content of her interjection or the motive for it. It was because the interjection was disruptive, and she and the rest of the members had been forewarned about that conduct. The point therefore does not hold in my view.
13. She further claims that her interjection was made during a “recess.” I take her to mean by this point that the interjection was not made during proceedings of the House. I disagree with her. The interjection was made at a time when a division was called and I was announcing that the bells would be rung for 15 seconds. That was an important moment in the proceedings because it concerned voting, which members had to know how it was to proceed.
14. In conclusion, I am convinced that the principle of the ruling that I followed was correct and applied fairly.

Mr QR Dyantyi, MP

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