**MEDIA STATEMENT

HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WELCOMES INCEPTION OF PROCESS TO IMPLEMENT FINDINGS OF PUBLIC PROTECTOR’S REPORT**
**Parliament, Saturday, 27 February 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs has welcomed a process initiated by the Department of Home Affairs to implement findings of the Public Protecor Report No: 18 of 2020/21. The committee has instructed the department to furnish it with a progress report at the end of March 2021.

Some of the remedial actions that the department has initiated include disciplinary action against departmental officials who were involved in the naturalisation of Mr Ajay Gupta and his family for their failure to exercise due diligence in verifying the accuracy of the information contained in the motivation for early naturalisation.

The committee also welcomes the commitment by the Minister to annually within 14 days after the commencement of sittings in Parliament,  table the names of persons who are granted certificates of naturalisation in terms of section 5(9)(a) of the Citizenship Act to ensure adequate oversight.

Meanwhile, the committee also welcomes the appointment of a Ministerial Committee to review the issuance of permanent residence, corporate permits, professional (scarce skills) visas, citizen naturilisation and retired persons visas. The committee wil also develop guidelines on the implementation of the Immigration Act. The committee notes the calibre of individuals appointed by the Minister and will await the report of the committee with the hope that it will close identified gaps in the principal legislation.

Regarding the matter of protesting “refugees” in Cape Town, the committee has again instructed all stakeholders to iron out remaining coordination challenges in resolving the matter. The committee notes and welcomes the assurance that since the initial instruction by the committee, a lot of work has been done to coordinate efforts to resolve the matter. The committee was informed that among the remainining challenges, there’s a lack of sharing of information that is critical in developing and implementing an exit plan.

Despite this, the committee is concerned that since the meeting of stakeholders on 30 November 2020, no meeting took place, something which has had a negative implact on the conclusion of an exit plan. “The information that no meeting took place as a result of the level 3 Covid-19 regulations, is unsatisfactory and has a delaying impact on the finalisation of the exit plan,” said Mr Mosa Chabane, the Acting Chairperson of the committee.

As a result, the committee has given the stakeholders until 15 March 2021 to find each other and consolidate the exit plan, which will be tabled before Parliament and the committee.

Also, the committee welcomes the verification process undertaken by the department to verify the status of those at the two sites and has urged for a speedy conclusion of the process. Despite this, the committee remains concerned about the state of affiars at the two sites, especially in relation to risk factor in the spreading of Covid-19.

The committee appreciates the work done by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in engaging individuals in both these sites to address those who have indicated their intention to participate in a voluntary repatriation programme. The committee will await a report upon the finanlisation of the process.

Finally, the committee will revisit the two sites where the “refugees” are encamped as a temporatry measure, to assess the progress of various processes aimed at resolving the matter.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, MR MOSA CHABANE.**