**PROGRESS REPORT ON PROTESTING “REFUGEES” IN CAPE TOWN**
**Parliament, Tuesday, 11 May 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs welcomes the reintegration into society of 414 refugees and asylum seekers, who were residing at the Wingfield and Paint City temporary site. The committee also welcomes the voluntary repatriation of 305 refugees and asylum-seekers from South Africa. Progress in the matter is welcomed and is a step in the right direction towards resolving the issue.

“Despite a number of challenges encountered since the start of the matter, the committee appreciates the work put in by all stakeholders to conclude the matter. We further welcome the visible collaboration between the UNHCR [United Nations Refugee Agency], the City of Cape Town, the Western Cape Provincial Government, the SAHRC [South African Human Rights Commission] and the Department of Home Affairs to conclude the matter,” said Mr Mosa Chabane, the Acting-Chairperson of the committee.

Importantly, the committee appreciates the spirit of ubuntu personified by the people of South Africa who have welcomed back the 414 people into communities. This dispels the wrong impression created that refugees and asylum-seekers are not welcome in South Africa. “The reintegration proves the long-held view that protests were premised on misinformation and nefarious reasons outside of those that were presented,” Mr Chabane said.

Meanwhile, the committee has called on the Department of Home Affairs to conclude the verification and documentation of the remaining 43 people to ensure that the UNHCR process is concluded.

Nonetheless, the committee is concerned that some 350 people remain defiant and have resolved not to take advantage of the generous offers made by the UNHCR. Furthermore, the committee is concerned that children continue to be robbed of the right to education. “The committee is of the view that everything humanly possible has been done to assist the group of protesters and their continued defiance is unjustified and irresponsible,” Mr Chabane said.

The committee welcomes the initiative by the Department of Home Affairs call in the Department of Social Services to assist, especially in relation to school-going children. “We are even more concerned by the suggestions that children and women will be used as human shields when the removals are implemented. This is inexcusable, especially in the context of generous offers made,” Mr Chabane emphasised.

As a way forward, the committee has urged the department to develop a framework on how to deal with any similar future cases, to ensure speedy resolution guided by policy.

Meanwhile, the committee received a response to various complaints raised by unions representing employees at the Government Printing Works (GPW). As a result, the committee has resolved to undertake, following approval processes, an oversight visit to the entity to deal with persistent complaints raised within the institution. The committee intends to interact with every stakeholder to ensure that resolutions are found to reported challenges at the entity, including the alleged loss of data and system crash that hampered production.

The GPW plays an integral part in producing credible security documentation in South Africa and has made impressive strides in extending its footprint into the Southern African Development Community region with the ultimate goal of serving the entire African continent.

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