**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE WELCOMES DEPLOYMENT OF MORE SOLDIERS**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 14 July 2021 –**The Joint Standing Committee on Defence has welcomed the current deployment of 2500 of the South African (SANDF) personnel to assist the police to gain control over some areas affected by security challenges.  The committee has called for a significant increase in deployment of soldiers.

“The increase in availability of forces should be such that it will allow the SANDF to effectively support the South African Police Service (SAPS) operations, allow for increased responses to cases of looting and violence, and to secure National Key Points where necessary,” said Mr Cyril Xaba, the Co-Chairperson of the committee.

The committee condemned the violence especially in the context of the impact it has on the economy. “The unrest has damaged the reputation of the country and undermined all the efforts to put the economy back on an upward trajectory again” said Mr Elleck Nchabeleng, the Co-Chairperson of the committee.

In response, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, announced that she was sending a request to the President to authorise the deployment of 25 000 SANDF personnel to both provinces (KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng).

Mr Xaba emphasised that “the implementation of this recommendation to scale up deployment is critical in that it prevents the need for a state of emergency as some benefits, such as the imposing of a curfew, have already been attained through the current state of disaster that is in place”.

The committee has reiterated its support for additional deployment especially because of the impact the defence force has had on the ground since it landed. Based on that, it has resolved to adjourn the meeting with Minister Mapisa-Nqakula and the top brass of the SANDF to allow for the incorporation of this new development into the plan.

This will enable the committee to interact with a fully-fledged plan with clear milestones. The committee will communicate the details of the rescheduled meeting. It reiterates its condemnation of violence and disobedience of the rule of law especially because of the negative impact the violence, wanton looting and vandalism of infrastructure will have on our already ailing economy.

The committee has further called for closer collaboration between the security apparatus of the country to quell the violence that causes havoc and severe damage to the country’s ailing economy.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, MR CYRIL XABA AND MR MAMAGASE NCHABELENG**