**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT CENTRAL TO DEFEATING FRAUD AND CORRUPTION WITHIN THE HOME AFFAIRS ENVIRONMENT**

**Parliament, Tuesday, 7 September 2021 –**The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs has emphasised that the speedy finalisation of disciplinary cases and implementation of consequence management remain central in instituting a culture of intolerance to corruption and fraud within the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). The committee today received an update on initiatives to counter fraud and corruption within the home affairs environment.

“While we welcome the implementation of the Counter Corruption & Fraud Prevention Strategy, the committee underscored that it is only through effective consequence management that the department will successfully win the war against malfeasance. To this end, we welcome the suspension of five officials as a result of a Public Protector report,” said Mr Mosa Chabane, the Chairperson of the committee.

Also, the committee welcomed the 215 cumulative arrests that have been effected since the inception of Operation Bvisa Masina in 2015, which included arrest of 123 Home Affairs officials, 84 syndicate members and eight South African Police Service Members. While the committee acknowledges that the criminal process often takes longer due to various reasons, it has highlighted the need to conclude internal disciplinary processes quicker to ensure consequence management.

The committee also appreciated the information from the Minister that, as per the law, he is interacting with the Minister of Arts and Culture with the aim of enabling the latter Minister to charge an official that left the DHA to join the Department of Arts and Culture. “We commend the action by the Minister, especially in the context of the worrying trend of officials that resign from one department when facing disciplinary cases only to reappear in another department. The actions by the Minister will ensure that any official accused of wrongdoing is taken through the necessary process,” Mr Chabane emphasised.

The cooperation with law enforcement agencies is welcomed but must be strengthened at all times to close any gaps that might be exploited by criminals working together with officials of the department. The committee also welcomed the information that the department is performing at an average of above 70% in relations to investigating reported cases of fraud and corruption within 90 days which will ensure speedy resolution of cases.

Despite this, the committee has raised concerns regarding the slow turnaround times in vetting officials as per the security requirements. The committee has called on the State Security Agency to increase their capability to ensure that vetting is done adequately within a reasonable time to prevent any unwanted elements from accessing the DHA service points.

Regarding security of Home Affairs offices, the lack of cameras and electronic monitoring systems is a longstanding concern which impacts on the ability of DHA to safeguard their systems. The committee has noted the financial challenges faced by the department and the entire public service in ensuring effective funding of programmes. The committee has urged the department to find workable solutions to competing objectives.

Regarding the review process of visas and permits led by Dr Casious Lubisi, the committee has called on the Minister to table such a report whenever it is available to enable the committee to appraise itself on its findings and recommendations aimed at improving the permitting system.

The committee has also committed, from time-to-time, to request updates on the disciplinary cases within the department

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