**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE SUPPORTS DEPLOYMENT OF SANDF AS CONTINGENCY TO SAFEGUARD LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Parliament, Friday, 29 October 2021 –**The Joint Standing Committee on Defence has today unanimously supported the planned deployment of members of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to cooperate with the South African National Police Service (Saps) to ensure a safe and secure environment to conduct the Local Government Elections 2021.

As part of the employment, the SANDF will be responsible for protection of national key points and critical infrastructure, thereby releasing Saps members from static security duties to normal police work, and to provide a reaction capability on standby; to provide air transport support to inaccessible areas; to protect voting material storage warehouses; as well as to provide members to be trained as electoral officials and be on standby for utilisation as a contingency.

Parliament pledges our full support to all the members of the security cluster who will be deployed during this period. "A free and fair election is the bedrock of our constitutional democracy and every effort should be applied to ensure that the elections are safeguarded and the IEC [Electoral Commission of South Africa] is able to deliver a peaceful election. This deployment is essential for planning purposes to ensure that the Justice Crime Prevention and Security Cluster is in a position to deploy when the need arises," said Mr Cyril Xaba, the Co-Chairperson of the Committee.

The committee also highlighted its appreciation that the expected expenditure of R47 249 000 is budgeted for, within the baseline of the SANDF. "Efficient planning is critical in ensuring prudent spending of taxpayers' monies. We appreciate that clear planning was done in this instance and will ensure that money is not diverted from other programmes of the department," emphasised Mr Mamagase Nchabeleng, the Co-Chairperson of the Committee.

The committee reiterated its support and appreciation of the excellent work that the SANDF continues to do whenever deployed, despite funding challenges.

**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**

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