**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COOPERATION AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRAL TO FIGHTING CROSS-BORDER CRIMES**

**Parliament, Saturday, 27 November 2021 –**The Joint Standing Committee on Defence says that better collaboration within the Justice and Crime Prevention cluster is the antidote to cross-border criminal activity. The committee received a briefing from the Department of Defence, Netstar and Tracker on efforts to curb car smuggling across South Africa's land borders.

"We are cognisant of the challenges that our law enforcement agencies face on a daily basis when discharging their duty. Hence the call for a collaborative effort, because we are stronger when we act in unison," said Mr Cyril Xaba, the Co-Chairperson of the committee. This collaboration should also include private security companies to enable coordination and planning.

The committee has also emphasised the need for the Department of Defence to utilise technological advances as force multipliers to aid in the fight against cross-border illegality. The committee has for some time now called for the integration of Technogym systems and processes into daily operations to increase efficiency.

The committee remains aware of the funding shortfall that has continued to impact the ability and capability of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to effectively implement its mandate. Despite this, the committee has called for innovation and partnerships to resolve challenges of cross-border criminality.

The committee is committed to a continuous engagement with stakeholders to find workable and mutually beneficial ways of tackling cross-border criminality.

Meanwhile, the committee received a briefing on various SANDF internal and external deployments, to keep Parliament abreast with progress on these deployments. The committee welcomes constant updates and regards them as a key pillar of civilian oversight over the SANDF.

Despite this, the committee has highlighted the urgency needed to investigate allegations of rotten food given to deployed soldiers in Mozambique. The committee awaits a comprehensive report on this matter.

**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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