**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS CAUTIONS MILITARY VETERANS DEPARTMENT AGAINST FISCAL DUMPING**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 9 February 2022 –**The Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans was unhappy to hear that the Department of Military Veterans has spent only 48% of its budget in three quarters of the current financial year. The committee has described this as a glaring and gross indictment, as it will be impossible to spend the remaining 52% in the last quarter.

The Chairperson of the committee, Mr Cyril Xaba said: "This is a huge disservice for people who are waiting for service. The budget, which was cut, could not be finished and the money will go back to the national treasury [which] is unacceptable."

Mr Xaba said this poor spending record will have an adverse effect on the lives of military veterans, who sacrificed their lives for years in the fight against apartheid. Nonetheless, Mr Xaba cautioned the department against fiscal dumping.

The Department of Military Veterans appeared before the committee today to brief it on quarters two and three of the current financial year. It also updated the committee on the budget review and recommendations report, and presented a progress report on the finalisation and updating of policies on services and benefits, particularly public transport, pensions, housing and bursary benefits.

During the engagement, the committee called for the department to devise clear and translatable timeframes for the programmes set up to empower military veteran and to fast-track their implementation.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Ms Thandi Modise, admitted that the budget report is unimpressive. However, she assured the committee that problems in the department will be corrected. Ms Modise also mentioned that the department will invite the committee to a departmental retreat, so that the department can benefit from the committee's input.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS, MR CYRIL XABA.**

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