**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE FOR SECTION 194 ENQUIRY FINISHES FIRST WEEK OF HEARINGS**

**Parliament, Friday, 15 July 2022 –** The Committee for Section 194 Enquiry today finished three days of testimony and cross-examination of the first witness, whose evidence relates directly to the charges against Public Protector Adv Busisiwe Mkwebane’s fitness to hold office.

Mr Johann van Loggerenberg, a former employee of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and head of the high-risk unit, has been providing evidence to the committee since Wednesday. Most of this time was spent under cross-examination and ended the first week of hearings.

Committee Chairperson Mr Qubudile Dyantyi informed the committee that although the enquiry was set to sit the whole of next week, as per its programme, the Public Protector’s legal team requested that they be excused from Wednesday next week to prepare for a court case the following week, 25 and 26 July, in the Western Cape High Court. The committee agreed to the request.

Today, committee Members also engaged with Mr van Loggerenberg. During this session, Mr van Loggerenberg said Adv Mkhwebane could have reached him easily and gave several examples of how this could have been achieved. According to Adv Dali Mpofu (SC) on behalf of Adv Mkhwebane, she was led to believe that Mr van Loggerenberg was not traceable.

Mr van Loggerenberg further stated that he approached the then Public Protector Adv Thuli Madonsela to give evidence about what had happened at SARS, as he believed this could assist her in her investigation into state capture.

After cross-examination was concluded, Adv Mkhwebane had to take the oath before being questioned by Members of the committee. She conceded that it is her voice in a recording of a meeting with the Inspector-General of intelligence, which was played earlier this week to the committee. Another Member of the committee pointed out that Adv Mkhwebane was in possession of a classified report about an intelligence service investigation. Adv Mkhwebane was asked what her obligations were under the law having received a classified document. Adv Mpofu had said previously that the document was dropped off at the reception of the Office of the Public Protector. Adv Mkhwebane deferred her response to be answered later.

Several Members of the committee also asked questions on the attempts to trace Mr van Loggerenberg before making a finding on the SARS unit and wanted to know if proof exists that efforts were made to trace him. Adv Mkhwebane said her legal team will call witnesses to confirm the efforts made to trace him.

Mr Dyantyi indicated that the committee has a subpoenaed witness for Monday and Tuesday and cannot change the date for this. It will therefore not be able to hear from Mr Ivan Pillay, as its expected next witness. The committee is expected to finalise its work by the end of September 2022. The enquiry is hybrid and can be followed live on Parliament’s media platforms.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SECTION 194 ENQUIRY, MR QUBUDILE DYANTYI.**

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