**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE BRIEFED BY NPA ON PROGRESS ON TRC MATTERS**

**Parliament, Friday, 25 November 2022 –** The Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services today received a progress report from the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) on Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) prosecutions.

Committee Chairperson Mr Bulelani Magwanishe said the committee commend the NPA for the progress made on the TRC cases. “We can see some light at the end of the tunnel. There is clearly some work that still needs to be done, but we note the progress. This is the reason why we initiated regular engagements with the NPA on this very emotive matter.”

The committee heard that dedicated capacity to deal with TRC cases has been increased within both the NPA and the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI). This has, in turn, led to increased engagements with the families/stakeholders, a concern the committee has raised in the past.

The NPA told the committee that in addition to enhanced capacity and stakeholder engagement, the NPA will appoint senior counsel to assess whether the measures it has adopted are adequate. “If they are not, senior counsel shall make recommendations to strengthen them. If, in the process of review, senior counsel have reason to believe that there is information amounting to a violation of Section 41(1) of the NPA Act, such issues are to be escalated to the national director of Public Prosecutions. If necessary, the NPA will refer matters for criminal investigation.”

The committee heard that the Missing Person Task Team, in addition to recovering the remains of 179 missing persons, also has recorded several successes. These successes include, among others, the location of the remains of an uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) member shot dead in 1980, with an excavation planned; the identification of a burial site where four MK members were ambushed in the Caprivi Strip in 1970; and the recovery of the remains of a political prisoner, Mr James Booi, who had been buried in a pauper’s grave. His remains were exhumed and presented to the family for re-burial, which took place on 30 July 2022.

A total of 25 dedicated NPA TRC prosecutors have been appointed and a further 40 TRC investigators have been appointed to the DPCI. To date, 129 TRC matters under investigation and 64 new investigations have been re-opened. KwaZulu-Natal has the highest volume of TRC matters reported, with 29. Gauteng Local Division has 25 and Makhanda, in the Eastern Cape, has 25. In 64 of the 94 matters, statements have been obtained, witnesses have been traced, exhibits, dockets and records of inquest have been sought and some have been obtained. In most matters, families have been informed, where they are traceable. A total of 56 matters occurred from 1980 to 1989 and 27 matters occurred from 1970 to 1979.

Committee members were encouraged by the progress, but advised that funding be ring-fenced, to ensure that the process moves speedily.

Mr Magwanishe said the committee will continue to monitor the progress and meet regularly with the NPA on the matter. “The nation needs closure on these matters. One of the lessons we must learn, when you don’t act on time, is that you are bound to act under unreasonable pressure. In this case, some witnesses have died and some now claim they can’t follow proceedings. We should have acted earlier and this should serve as a lesson to all of us.”

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MR** **BULELANI MAGWANISHE.**

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairperson, please contact the committee’s Media Officer:
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