**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**COMMITTEE FOR SECTION 194 UNABLE TO HEAR NEW WITNESS; BREAKS FOR THE YEAR**

**Parliament, Monday, 5 December 2022 –** The Committee for Section 194 Enquiry into Public Protector (PP) Adv Busisiwe Mkhwebane’s fitness to hold office today had to postpone its hearings as the witness, the Public Protector from the Republic of Zambia, was not available to testify due to not having the necessary clearance from her country.

The committee heard that Adv Caroline Zulu-Sokoni needs to inform the Zambian government that she intends travelling outside the country to address South Africa’s Parliament. Adv Dali Mpofu, SC, explained at the start of today’s hearings that Adv Zulu-Sokoni has recently been nominated as a judge in Zambia. Adv Mpofu noted that Adv Zulu-Sokoni has not yet been able to get permission to travel out of the country and that she would prefer to testify in person. Because the processes for her appointment as a judge may take longer than initially expected, Adv Mpofu believes she will be able to testify in January 2023.

Committee Chairperson Mr Qubudile Dyantyi wanted to know when the issue of the “permission” certificate became known. Adv Zulu-Sokoni indicated that this is the process for all government officials wanting to leave the country, whether work-related or personal. Adv Zulu-Sokoni said she was only informed that she would be appointed as a judge in the week before last. She was later informed that she would have to notify her government that she would testify before the South African Parliament as a “courtesy”, rather than to seek “approval” to do so. She had also been cautioned by her office that even if her testimony was virtual, it would be better if she informed her government first.

During clarity questions posed by Members, Mr Dyantyi indicated that the latest committee draft programme has been approved by the Presiding Officers of Parliament. In this programme a deadline was provided to the committee and a firm indication was already given that that deadline will not be extended. “We will have to finalise our work within that time frame. We will have to allocate the witness onto this programme.”

Mr Dyantyi said the committee will resume its hearings on 30 January 2023. According to the latest draft programme, the committee is expected to finalise its work on 21 April 2023. The committee was established by the National Assembly on 16 March 2021 to conduct an inquiry into the Public Protector’s fitness to hold office. Committee documents can be found at [Committee for Section 194 Enquiry - Parliament of South Africa](https://parliament.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=174940c63c5e06b60f5650bea&id=1325ce6310&e=da105e4f6a)

**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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