**UNREVISED HANSARD NATIONAL**

 **ASSEMBLY WEDNESDAY,**

**1 MARCH 2023**

***PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID NATIONAL ASSEMBLY***

The House met at 15:00.

The House Chairperson Mr C T Frolick took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayers or meditation.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The first item on today’s Order Paper is Questions addressed to Ministers in Cluster 1, Peace and Security. There are four supplementary questions on each question.

Parties have given an indication of which questions their members wish to pose the supplementary question on and adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose. This

was done to facilitate the participation of members who are connecting to the sitting through the virtual platform.

The members who will pose supplementary questions will be recognised by the presiding officer. In allocating opportunities for supplementary questions a principle of fairness amongst has been applied.

If a member who is supposed to ask a supplementary question through the virtual platform is unable to do so due technical difficulties, the party Whip on duty will be allowed to ask the question on behalf of their member.

When all supplementary questions have been answered by the executive we will proceed to the next question on the order paper. The first question has been asked by the hon N.P Peacock to the hon Minister of Police.

**QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY – CLUSTER 1: PEACE AND SECURITY**

Question 11:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, I am told that the hon Minister connected, he is just having difficulties with one of the devices that he is using. Let us just be patient and give him some time. The hon Minister of Police can you hear us?

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Chairperson, I can hear you now.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Please proceed hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: I will be answering the first question because I did not hear your deliberation towards me. I was frozen.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): We are busy with the first question Minister, you may proceed.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: The SA Police Service Act 68 of 1995 is being amended to strengthen the functioning of the Community Policing Forum, CPFs, and to ensure the provision of adequate resources to enable optimal functioning.

The SAPS is currently investigating a proper finding model for the CPFs and progress in this regard will be reported in due course as we are progressing. Thank you very much Chairperson.

Ms N P PEACOCK: Thank you Minister for the response. My question is, ensuring effective well-resourced CPFs requires that the SAPS conduct an audit of the state of the SAPS or CPFs across the country. This may take time and resources, however, has the SAPS conducted the audit on the state of the CPFs across the country, if not will the SAPS consider undertaking such an audit? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: I hope I will be audible because the member was breaking quite badly. Chairperson, the SAPS can conduct the audit around the country but as it stands, out of

1 158 police stations in the country, almost all police stations have functioning CPFs with only less than five that are don’t.

What we need to do is to finalize what we have started by find ways of ensuring that there is any form of assistance, not necessarily financial assistance. People have already been given the task and they will be reporting this month in the

MinMec of the SA Police Service that will be taking place in Bloemfontein this month. So from there onwards, we will be in a position to know exactly what is supposed to be done in working to assist these CPFs around the country. Thank you Chair.

M.Gen O S TERBLANCHE: Minister, the Civilian Secretariat for Police Service’s, CSPS, main aim should be to enhance proactive and reactive policing outcomes by mobilising community support. What is the rationale then to move CPFs and community patrollers to the CSPS while SAPS is responsible for this function within their budget allocation?

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Thank you Chairperson. There has been a complaint from the communities we serve to say if all resources are in the police’s hands, then the police prevent the CPF from doing their work.

Let us make an example, for instance if the police are to face a discussion that they do not like, you might not find transportation for the CPFs to the police stations. There is a complaint to say, police would stop facilitation and give money and resources to the people that oversee them.

It is important that when it goes to the secretariat it enhances their independence. It will enhance the CPF’s work together with the secretariat. It seems to be out of the demand of the communities themselves to move there. We will have to follow that. Thank you Chairperson.

Mr H A SHEMBENI: Minister, the violent nature of the crimes committed and the fact that the violence is organised and coordinated somewhere and the general believes amongst the people that most of those involved in committing these crimes are protected and aided by the police themselves. They put the lives of many community members involved in policing forums at risk.

What suite of measures have you put in place to ensure that community members are involved in fighting crime are protected when the reality is that key SAPS members are themselves involved in committing these crimes? Thank you Chair.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Chairperson, there are those allegations of the SA Police Service members being involved in crime. Some of those allegations have been proven to be

correct because there are members of the SA Police Service that are in prison.

For instance, with the last crime statistics, for the last three months, 46 members of the SA Police Service were arrested or dismissed from the organisation. Indeed, it is true that some members of the CPF and members of the community out there do raise the issue to say sometimes working with the police is dangerous or in some of the police stations it is dangerous because they go back and report to the very perpetrators to say, where did they get this information.

But many other members of the community together with the members of the CPF enjoy working with the police because they can see the results as those police structures get information to go and implement it to arrest those people.

The question asked by hon Shembeni is a question that we are all battling with. What do we do to protect the members of CPF from that kind of unscrupulous police that put them in danger. But it is part of a research as well as part of what we are discussing going forward together with the very same members of the CPF. Thank you Chair.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon Minister, you just indicated that almost all police stations have CPFs and neighbourhood watches. How effective is this, given the fact that violence, particularly gender-based violence is on the increase and yet we have CPFs, neighbourhood watches working in collaboration with the SA Police Service but the levels of crime are increasing? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Indeed, the levels of crime are not acceptable but it is not true that all CPFs and structures that hon member has mentioned are not working. There are areas where it is working very well and one has been receiving those reports as you move around to say here we work very well with the police, here we work very well with the communities, that will come from the police.

But we will have to expand that and ensure that every corner and every police station ... [Inaudible.] We must remember that originally, CPFs are voluntary structures. We are now taking into cognisance that they will have to be assisted with some form of resources. That is what we are working towards, we believe that once the relationship is better, it will happen.

Chairperson, there are stations out of 1 158 that will be zero in reporting of murder or some kind of criminality and we find that communities are involved in working closely with the police. That is the model that we should put in place that every station must have functional and better relationship with the communities and the police management through the CPF and other community structures that have been mentioned. Thank you very much.

Question 42:

The MINISTER OF POLICE: House Chairperson, the South African Police Service management has taken the following steps in improving the performance of 10111 call centres.

1. The South African Police Service, SAPS, is in the process of finalising the advertisement of posts for the appointment of interns in 2022-2023, to improve the administrative support functions at the 1011 call centres. In addition, demands for appointment of additional interns in 2023-2024 have been identified and are in process of consideration.
2. The utilisation of SAPS personnel from police stations and units within the provinces is being considered as an

interim mechanism to address personnel shortages at the 10111 call centres. The consideration also includes earmarked provision for overtime.

1. Training and development deficiencies at the 10111 call centres will be addressed through the rollout of 10111 learning programme and training the trainer workshop. This will be implemented as from 6 March 2023.
2. In order to enhance command and control at 10111 call centres, a total number of 10 posts were advertised and filled through the SAPS post promotion processes.
3. To address current funded vacant positions, the total number of 98 posts have been identified and will be advertised and filled with effect from the 1st of May

... [Inaudible.] ... question, answer says in 2023, depending on the revision and outcome of work study investigation that has already commenced, the steps will earmark the allocation of personal 10111 call in line with the staff compliment to be proposed through the work study investigation and those positions that are existing now. Thank you very much House Chair.

Mr A G WHITFIELD: House Chair, over and above the 10111 call centre dysfunction, telephone lines at the actual police

stations are not even working. Last year the DA conducted the research which revealed that only 44% of the 270 police stations which we phoned, actually answered their calls at all.

More worryingly, 40% of these 270 police stations had faulty numbers or simply not operable. So, even if the 10111 call centres were operating optimally - by the sounds of the Minister’s plan, they won’t be. They wouldn’t be able to even get hold of almost half of police stations in order to respond to a crime.

In his state of the nation address speech, President Ramaphosa said:

We will use our competitiveness in call centre operations to support the proper functioning of the 10111 help line,

partnering with the private sector.

Does the Minister support the partnership with the private sector to turn the situation around at the 10111 centres as alluded to buy the President in his Sona address? And by when

can the South Africans expect the situation to be turned around? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: House Chairperson, the issue raised by the hon member on the telephones that are not working.

Sometimes that’s not the police issue per se, it’s our sister organization that we work with, that are supposed to look after that. Even when you’ve reported, you would not get the response that you wish you have, from that sister department. That’s the first one.

The second one, one major problem, the loadshedding has a serious negative impact in working of those telephones, not only that, including the radios at the stations. Sometimes, because there’s a loadshedding they would not work properly. Thirdly, even the cell phones that are given mostly to the station commanders and to the sector officers, sometimes they are not charged because there’s no electricity and they are not in response because there’s a problem of signals.

But when it comes to the officers that are there, as the people that are supposed to respond in the vans. We give them

cell numbers, as we have done recently in Khayelitsha, where all vans that are patrolling are having these numbers.

Coming to what has been announced by the President, that is in process. We have advertised the posts and we are filling the posts that exist. The posts that will be advertised will be some extra intern, some are permanent, to make sure that the numbers that are short are filled by both permanent and the staff that are interns.

Working with the private sector is exactly what is happening now. We share them some other resources, like going with them, when they are in operation, will share their resources to make sure that resources like drones and those that are for communication - that we are able to work with. That’s what we are doing at the present moment House Chair. Thank you.

Ms G P MAREKWA: House Chair, can the Minister provide the breakdown on how the 10 000 newly trained police constables will be deployed to different provinces, districts and other units within the SAPS? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: House Chairperson, the present situation of the police, that have just come out of college in December, most of them will be absorbed in the units that are specialising, including those that will be in communication.

As you could see that some of the police from the stations that are in the communication will be put in this 10111, others will stay at the stations. And those that will be on the 10111 call centres will have to be released.

But, when you working in the all number, that has been released from the college, 10 000 of them, 4000 of them will be going to Public Order Police, POP, and 357 of them will be going to the unit that deals with women, which is Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences, FCS, and some will be going to the specialised units, like the Tactical Response Team, TRT, and indeed some will be sent to the 10111 call centres.

As it has been explained that already, the ten of those has put on the commanding level at this 10111, so that when you the newly employed and the interns the command and control is improved.

We hope that the less number that will stay back will go back to the police stations, with the hope that the 10 000 intake for this year, starting in March, April, most of them will then go and enhance the stations. So that they are in the station, they are able to respond when they are called by these 10111 call centres to respond to those cases. Thank you very much House Chair.

*IsiZulu*:

Mnu A V KHOZA: Ngibonge, Sihlalo, ngibingelele, ngifisa nje ukuthi ngibuze laphaya kuNgqongqoshe ukuthi, njengoba sazi ukuthi abantu emiphakathini jikelele sebelahle ithemba ngokusebenza kwale nombolo yamaphoyisa engu-10111, sizwile enza iziphakamiso la zokuthi bazokwenza lokhu nalokhu. Siyazi ukuthi kuyizifiso nje nephupho.

Umbuzo uthi, uzoqinisekisa kanjani ukuthi ithemba leli abantu abasebelahlekelwe yilona liyabuya, okokuqala? Okwesibili, uzoqinisekisa kanjani ukuthi nakuba usungenile kule nombolo siyazi ukuthi izingcingo zigcina zilahlekile noma zingafikanga kuleso siteshi samaphoyisa osuke uthunyelwe kusona.

Uzoqinisekisa kanjani ukuthi uhlelo lolu olusha lezobuchwepheshe bemihla yamanje luyasetshenziswa

ukuqinisekisa ukuthi abantu bayasizakala ngoba lolu hlelo olukhona manje lwezingcingo yinto endala nje engasebenzi ehlohlozayo. [Kwaphela isikhathi]

UNGQONGQOSHE WAMAPHOYISA: Ngibonge kumfo kaKhoza ...

*English*:

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members! Order! Please, order, hon members! Please proceed, hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: House Chairperson, I thank the hon member, hon member Khoza. So ...

*IsiZulu*:

UNGQONGQOSHE WAMAPHOYISA: ... ngakhoke, le yokuthi abantu balahle ithemba jikelele, cha, akunjalo. Bakhona abantu abasethembele kulolu hlelo yingakho uma uvakasha kulezi zindawo ikakhulukazi ezinkulu njengo-Midrand uye uthole ukuthi izingcingo zakhona zikhala njalo, nathi sike sikwazi ukuvakasha sikwazi ukuziphendula sikhulume nanbantu.

Yebo, kenekhona ukwehla – ngiyavumelana nawe – kwethemba kodwa akuphelile nya. Yilokho esifuna ukuvuselela ukuthi kusetshenziswe ngendlela eyiyo ukuthi ithemba livuke libuye kubantu. Lokho ukuthi sizokuguqula kanjani ... enye into esizayo ukuthi amaphoyisa ande eziteshini ukuze akwazi ukuthi ahambe ayobheka lezo zinto. Lo-10 000 ofikile no-10 000 olandelayo uzokwazi ukusisiza kulokho. Nalezi zimoto ezingaphezulu kwezinkulungwane ezintathu esilindele ukuthi zifike kulezi zinyanga ezimbili zizokwazi ukusiza ukuthi amaphoyisa akwazi ukuphendula lokho.

Kwezobuchwepheshe, le okhuluma ngayo, bazokwazi ukuthi bathole izingcingo abantu abasebenza kulezi zimoto ukuthi bakwazi ukuthinteka noma bangabe bekuphi. Lokhu kobuchwepheshe siyakuqhuba siyasebenza nophiko lwethu lwezobuchwepheshe ekuthiwa i-Techology Management Services, TMS, nabanye abantu abasebenza ngobuchwepheshe okuyizinkampani ezizimele ukuthi sizokwazi ukuthi lelo hlelo siluqedele likwazi ukuphumelela libuyelwe nayithemba nabantu bakithi babuyelwe nayithemba.

Ngiyabonga, Sihlalo.

Ms Z MAJOZI: House Chair, hon Minister after you’ve told us about all the challenges that you are facing within the SAPS

call centres. What is the department’s plan in place to create satellite SAPS in all call centres? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: House Chairperson, the department’s plan, is firstly to fix the proper working of the ... [Interjection.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members there’s another member also on the platform! Can I ask the

*information and communications technolog*y, ICT, just to disconnect that member, please! Please proceed hon Minister.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: ... is to fix the problems that we are facing. Those problems that the member talks about, that we have pronounced and mentioned, is to fix those. And able the centres to function properly. To be able to reach all the stations and those stations to be able to respond to the nearest crime scene that is there.

But also, we are working at the places where the station has become too far because House Chairperson, the growth of the communities - some they grow away from police station that exists there. And it might take time to build the new police

station. We do try to put extra mobile police stations on those areas, so that people can be able to report but also police can be able to respond quicker.

In those places we work together with the Community Policing Forum, CPF, and the police management and the secretariat to identify those places.

This year, we have allocated 20 of those mobile vans to be around the community, then next year we are allocating 20 again so that we are trying to be closer to the community and be able to respond quickly. Thank you very much House Chair.

Question 35:

The DEPUTY MINISTER FOR STATE SECURITY IN THE PRESIDENCY:

Thank you very much, House Chair. We would like to emphasize that crime prevention and detection is the primary responsibility of the South African Police Service, SAPS, Crime Intelligence. To an extent that crime has now reached a level of impacting national security.

The State Security Agency and other Security Cluster departments are co-operating to share resources and

experiences to fight the high crime rate through joint operations. The State Security Agency provides early warnings on potential threats aimed at the lives of persons living in South Africa. Such intelligence [brief] is either liaised with crime intelligence, and or provided to law enforcement agencies such as SAPS and Hawks as the situation may demand.

Due to the heightened political killings in KwaZulu-Natal, KZN, an Integrated Multidisciplinary Task-Team was launched in 2018 under the auspices of National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure, NATJOINTS, to combat and subsequently investigate planned killings and assassinations. The State Security Agency is part of this initiative. Since its establishment, the Task-Team has investigated 226 dockets which resulted in 221 arrests. Concrete plans are afoot to ameliorate and eventually uproot this phenomenon.

The agency will continue to provide forewarning to law enforcement authorities on any planned political killings, including those related to assassinations of traditional leaders and other prominent individuals in society. Thank you, Chair.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: This one is so dramatic. I don’t know why he is even here. I’m going to stand in for commissar Ndlozi. Must I come to the podium as well?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): I think you look quite comfortable where you are, hon member. You can proceed from there.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Thank you very much, Deputy Minister. I think you are just taking us into confidence that you are going to be a Minister, judging by your approach. Ok. We are waiting. The question is, can you take the country into confidence on - what? We want specifics? Because this political killings, Deputy Minister, are not stopping. I can hear you stating that you have a plan, a clear plan, especially in KZN. But the political killings are taking place everywhere in the country. So, what specific plan do you have in place to combat these assassinations, particularly against prominent persons?

*IsiZulu:*

Sihamba sishaywa uvalo zinsukuzonke.

*English*:

... everyday. Can you just clarify that one? Where is the plan, a specific one? Otherwise you are not going to get that Ministerial position.

The DEPUTY MINISTER FOR STATE SECURITY IN THE PRESIDENCY:

Thank you very much, House Chair. You would recall that in 2018, the Inter-Ministerial Committee Task-Team was also established by the President who immediately emphasized on issues of political killings in KwaZulu-Natal. The mandate of that committee has now been expanded to the Eastern Cape, to areas of Mpumalanga, areas of Gqeberha in particular and Gauteng areas.

So, the work of that committee is underway. And I think a lot of progress is being made to identify the hotspots around issues of political assassinations and political killings.

Thank you, Chair.

Mr B M HADEBE: Thank you, House Chair. I have just arrived. Deputy Minister, DM, the appreciation is that at least the State Security Agency is providing intelligence brief to law enforcement agencies to act on these briefs. Just in an

overview, DM, please reflect on the co-ordination and collaboration of the agency with other law enforcement agencies in the fight against crime, including that of assassinations? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER FOR STATE SECURITY IN THE PRESIDENCY:

Thank you, hon Hadebe. To an extent that the levels of crime in the country are impacting on national security, and also undermine the principles that governs national security in terms of section 198 of the Constitution. We have initiated a process to interact with SAPS Crime Intelligence in provinces.

Beside us being a co-chair of NATJOINTS, we co-chair PROJOINTS. But, we also initiated a process where we interacted and met with Crime Intelligence in the Western Cape. We have been to the Eastern Cape, to see how best do we co-ordinate and share resources on each and every hotspots area. We will also be going to other provinces, because our view is that, we think that we need to deal with these issues of high levels of crime because they impact on national security, as I referred to section 198 of the Constitution. Thank you, Chair.

*IsiZulu:*

Mnu B M HADEBE: Yinto yakho le yithathe.

Ms N W A MAZZONE: Thank you so much, House Chairperson. Deputy Minister, given the fact that there has been a notable increase of political violence and assassinations across the country, most noticeably and seriously in KZN. We must now look to the Moerane Commission of Inquiry that released a 423- page document with findings and recommendations. I have to note that none of these recommendations have in fact been implemented. So, we need to ask a very simple question, why waste taxpayers’ money on a commission of this size in this nature and this importance, if the recommendations are not being implemented? What do you think are the reasons of the non-implementation? Is it simply a consequence of the divisions that exist within the Department of State Security? Or is it the fact that we just don’t have the capability to implement these recommendations?

The DEPUTY MINISTER FOR STATE SECURITY IN THE PRESIDENCY: The

implementation of the Moerane Commission of Inquiry recommendations are not the responsibility alone of the State Security Agency. You will be aware that the leadership of KZN through the former premier did explain some of the

constraints. As we leave the Eastern Cape, we will go to KZN as part of the interaction with the stakeholders within the law enforcement agencies to interact how best do we implement the Moerane Commission of Inquiry’s recommendations, to an extent that they help to deal with political killings and political assassinations. Thank you very much.

Mr M HLENGWA: Hon Chairperson, I will take the question on behalf of hon Inkosi Cebekhulu... [Interjections.] ...

*IsiZulu:*

Ngizalwa inkosi mina, yinto yakwethu le. Yinto yamakhosi le. Ngihleli ngegunya.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr CT Frolick): Hon Hlengwa, will you just proceed with the follow up question?

*English:*

DM, ultimately, the bottom line is that the investigative processes or lack thereof, do not result in successful prosecutions. Nobody is caught, nobody goes to jail. And that creates a conducive and enabling environment for the assassinations to go on. Can we put it to you then that the

intelligence services have failed outright, up to now? Because we have got killings of counsellors, amakhosi [traditional leaders], izinduna [headmen], Members of Parliament, MPs, and celebrities, right. On top of that is the general crime affecting all South Africans. We are seated here now, none of those families have received justice. What assurance do we have now that the interventions in place will resolve that problem? Because up to now, people have been killed and nobody is going to jail.

The DEPUTY MINISTER FOR STATE SECURITY IN THE PRESIDENCY: I

can assure you, hon Hlengwa, that part of this engagement with SAPS Crime Intelligence is precisely informed by your concerns. I must indicate that if you look at some of the work that has been done, for example, the issues around the killing of amakhosi [traditional leaders], they are not targeted because they are traditional leaders. But because some of them are counsellors. And they are targeted as counsellors. So, those political killings have a lot of complications around them. Therefore, I think the work of the Task-Team has assisted.

However, I must indicate that the role of state security agency is to collect intelligence and share that intelligence with law enforcement agencies that have the capacity to arrest. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr CT Frolick): Thank you, Deputy Minister. You can now take up your seat again and thank you for gracing the podium.

Question 15:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, Chairperson. May I please be allowed to mute my video because reception is very precarious where I am. Hon member, any person within the borders of the Republic of South Africa is entitled to an identity document of some form or another. The problem of being not able to get an identity document in one form or another is not confined to people originating from other countries. The difficulty is sometimes and quite often also experienced by South Africans themselves because of the difficulty of giving requisite information. It is a well-known fact that the late registration of birth, LRB, is a very ... [Inaudible.] ... and involves difficult process. Meaning that if you are without it at least more than 30 days or even more

so one year after you were born, officials have to delve into archives to get information. You are aware that our archives are all manual and it is only now that we are digitising them. It is for this reason that Home Affairs has established a policy that people must take birth certificates 30 days or less after birth. If you do it after that then problems start. In order to help people, we are trying to open Home Affairs offices in hospitals where birth is taking place.

But furthermore, the situation is compounded by the fact that we have three databases of human beings found in South Africa. The first one is the national population register. It registers birth, marriage, death, identification document, ID, and travel documents for the South Africans only. Then we have another system called the national immigration

information system, NIIS. This one registers refugees and asylumseekers. Unfortunately, it is not able to register their birth, death or marriage. The last one is the system called the visa adjudication system, VAS. This registers people who arrive in South Africa via any of the 17 visas or permits. It is only two weeks ago that government approved a Bill, the National Identification and Registration Bill for public comments. This Bill seeks to register all people found within

the Republic any time in one database without necessary changing their nationality. It is going to be called the national identification system, NIS. Thank you very much.

Ms A RAMOLOBENG: Thanks, House Chair. I will take the question for the hon Modise. Thanks, Minister. The challenge of the lack of identity document for these nationalists deny them their rights to citizenship and to enjoy the benefits of being a citizen. The reality is that this may not be an easy matter to deal with. Would the Department of Home Affairs consider engaging the countries of origin of the affected individuals to address this problem, Minister? Thanks, House Chair.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chairperson, we have already done so. Two weeks ago we met with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee, the UN Resident Co-ordinator and the UN’s ambassadors of about eight countries which are known to be sitting countries. One of the issues discussed was this issue, the issue of documentation after a child has been born in South Africa. And we are busy developing that. On Monday, I also have a three-hour meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to discuss this very issue. So, it is being taken care of. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, some of you are conversing very loud. Hon van der Merwe, I can hear everything you are saying and it makes it difficult for me to follow what the Minister is saying because connectivity is not very good.

Mr F J MULDER: Thank you, hon House Chair. We should remind ourselves that the Department of Home Affairs is the custodian, protector and verifier of the identity and status of citizens and other persons who are residents in South Africa. It also controls, regulates and facilitates immigration and the movement of persons through the ports of entry. We should ask ourselves if we consider the fact that the department is currently sitting on a backlog of 56 000 across all visa categories and they are only expecting to clear this backlog by June 2024. My question to the hon Minister would be, would the hon Minister agree that the department has failed its mandate? Thank you, Chair.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chairperson, no! Definitely, no, Chairperson. What the hon member is talking about, the visa backlog, is what every country accumulated. It is not only South Africa. During the COVID-19 pandemic there were no

international travels ... [Recording stopped.] ... In fact, there is a question here which I was going to answer because the hon member brought other type of visa that delayed. We had to close certain services in terms of the disaster management regulations, and that is why we have a backlog. The issue of 2024 is, if we work in a straight line now, if we do not change anything, but we are changing it ... [Recording stopped.] First, we have to do this adjudication and they are all legal team. They have just started to work this morning, they have just started with training and on 01 April they will start the real work. But we have also brought... [Inaudible.]

...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members! We do have a difficulty.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chairperson, can I go on? I thought you were ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Minister, order! Hon Minister connectivity is very bad. We can hardly hear your response. We do have the Deputy Minister in the House. If you

would agree to it we can ask you to liaise with the Deputy Minister and the Deputy Minister can respond.

Mr A H M PAPO: Chair, I just want to clarify. I thought maybe the other parties were informed because ... [Inaudible.] ... Cabinet ... [Inaudible.] ... are in Tshwane. The arrangement was that Ministers will answer virtually because they only finished the Cabinet at 14:00. It was a physical Cabinet and that’s why the Deputy Ministers are here in cases like this one where the Deputy Ministers will be answering. That was communicated to various parties.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order! Order, hon members.

Mr A H M PAPO: That’s the arrangement we made and it was communicate to various parties.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members! Now, why are you getting so excited? Why are you getting so excited, hon members? The Minister is trying his best. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Chairperson!

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): I have not recognised you yet. He is trying his best to answer a follow-up question and we are having a technical difficulty. The Deputy Minister is here and he can just pick up from where the Minister has left off and respond to the follow-up question. That’s not so difficult. Hon Deputy Minister!

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you, hon

Chairperson. Let us make it very clear that the department has not failed in handling the visa backlog. The visa backlog is a global phenomenon emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic. You’ll remember that all countries had to delay the process of issuing visas as there were no travels amongst countries. We are now dealing with that backlog. We have even gone to the extent of enhancing the team that is dealing with that particular visa backlog. And we are adding additional capacity and looking at other systems of doing so. So, the answer is that the department has not failed, this is a global phenomenon and we are handling the situation. Thank you.

Mr W M THRING: Thank you, House Chair. Deputy Minister, Mr Alphius Mahlangu, the Deputy Director of the Department of Home Affairs of Immigration Services and Customs said in a radio interview that as a result of the new interministerial regulations, all of the benefits of South Africans pertaining to hospitals, schools and the issuing of IDs to the Zimbabweans will apply. Can the Deputy Minister confirm whether this is indeed the case, and if, yes, was a socioeconomic impact or risk benefit assessment conducted? If this is not the case, what is the current interministerial status with Zimbabwe? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Firstly, I would like to make it quite clear that we do not have Mhlanga as a deputy director-general, DDG, in immigration services. Our current acting DDG for immigration services is Mr Yusuf Simons. So, I am not sure where the member is getting that particular information. The only person that we know to be working with is Mlanga, from the Department of Basic Education. Probably, he is referring to the spokesperson of the Department of Basic Education. We do have a memorandum of understanding, MoU, with the Department of Basic Education that has to deal with leaners who do not have

the necessary documentation. Part of our work in that regard is the deployment of mobile units which go to schools to make sure that learners do not leave school for them to get identification documents. Thank you.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Thank you, Chairperson. Allow me to start off by commending this particular department because you set a world record that in 20 minute from application you issued a visa for an international ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Shaik Emam, you may switch off your video. Hon Shaik Emam, please, switch off your video it is causing a consternation here.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Hon Chairperson, allow me to commend the Department of Home Affairs. It took them exactly 20 minutes from the time of application to the time of issuing a visa. With no doubt at all! Over and above that, a person that did not have an ID for 22 years, in two weeks he was back in the street of Home Affairs. Their assistance was able to provide an ID. Deputy Minister, the question is, what is the setbacks in terms of your information technology, IT, infrastructure,

and how are you intending to deal with that to expedite applications? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. Indeed, we have made great progress in how we offer services to the public. I am happy that the hon member is one of the people who have heard about the good work that we are doing in pushing turnaround times. This is as a result of investment in infrastructure which we continue to do, this is the investment in new technology that we continue to do, this is as a result of the deployment of mobile units which we have been increasing over the past years and this is as a result of the partnerships that we have had with banks where clients are able to go to the banks and apply for services.

We are now continuing to enhance our services offering through opening of offices in hospitals so that our people will be able to get birth certificates. We are in a partnership with the Department of Health. We are also looking at a MoU to have our citizens get death certificates in the very same hospitals. So, we accept the good work that we are doing and we will continue to do more and invest more in infrastructure and technology to better our services.

Question 5:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Hon

House Chair, thank you very much. The information forwarded to your office appears to be inaccurate. The Minister is enroute home from official visit abroad. It appears that there were technical challenges in her travel, but the Minister was supposed to be in Parliament today. May I respectfully ask that the questions to the Ministry stand over to the next day of availability of the Minister in the House? Thank you, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members! Order! Hon Macpherson, why do you have your hand up?

Mr D W MACPHERSON: House Chairperson, if the appoint of the Deputy Minister is to be able to assist a Minister, and the Deputy Minister cannot answer the questions on behalf of the Minister, what is the point of having the Deputy Minister then? Secondly, the Minister knew timeously and was provided enough time to know that they would have to answer the questions and the Minister’s inability to keep her diary should not become the problem of this House. Therefore, with respect, the Deputy Minister should be competent, and if

they’re not competent then, you know, the caucus of the ANC must deal with that. However, really it’s not fair to say that no questions can be asked today. Thanks, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, may I draw your attention to Rule 144 in the 9th Edition of the Rules of the National Assembly and it states as follows: sub rule 1, the question for oral reply must stand over if the Minister to whom it is addressed (a) so requests, either in the Assembly when the question comes up for reply, or by notice in writing to the Speaker before the start of question time on the day for which the question is scheduled for on the Question Paper; and (b) is not present in the Assembly when the question comes up for reply and the question is not replied by the relevant Deputy Minister or another Cabinet Minister on his or her behalf, in terms of Rule 138(3). Therefore, that is the rule that I’m applying.

We will make the necessary arrangement for the hon Minister of Defence and Military Veterans to answer the question on another question day. Therefore, that will be dealt with not here, it will be dealt with in appropriate forums. Hon Hlengwa!

Mr M HLENGWA: House Chair, thank you very much. I ... [Inaudible.] ... know the ruling you have made and you say that it will be on another forum, but the issue is, I know it’s in the rules, and I know the rules very well.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, please address me.

Mr M HLENGWA: However, the issue, House Chairperson, is that none of the issues you have raised have followed that rule. That is the issue and I hope that in saying that you will deal with it in another forum that will be considered because the Ministers who are not being here then there’s an acting Minister that has stand on protocol in Cabinet, somebody act for the Minister ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, thank you for your intervention. I have ruled on the matter. I have now ruled on the matter because we’re taking up now question time. I’ve made a ruling, hon member, and we will deal with the matter outside of this forum. We will not speculate on either this or that. Therefore, that is the ruling and I will not change it.

Mr M HLENGWA: That is fine, House Chair, if you can register the IFP’s dissatisfaction with your ruling since this is also our ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Hlengwa, you can also take my ruling to the appropriate forum which is in line with the rules also. Yes, hon member.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: House Chairperson, as much as we know that you are reading us a Riot Act which is a Rules Book, it is not fair because today we had a Chief Whips Forum and none of this was communicated in the Chief Whip’s Forum. And again, House Chair, you are running to tell us about the rules, hon Papo here just stood up and clarified some of the issues here. Now, the Deputy Minister is available and the Minister is not available, so you are not even helping the situation. However, you are just telling us about the rule. That is not fair, House Chairperson, we are here to work. Therefore, everyone must come and work. We are working here. We are not playing.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon members. Hon members, hon members, order! Order! Order, hon members! Hon members, some of you who have raised these points

of order are members of the Chief Whips Forum and also the Rules Committee, and so forth. The question will be dealt with, we will now proceed to the Question 1. Yes, hon Groenewald.

Mr P J GROENEWALD: Hon House Chair, firstly, just on a point of clarity, I accept your rule because it is within the rules. However, what I want clarity on is that I want to know if that means the next question for oral reply or for the next occasion where the security cluster questions will be asked again. And the reason I ask for that clarity, hon House Chair, is quite uncertainty amongst military veterans and they followed the programme of Parliament and they would also want clarity whether it will be the next occasion or only the next occasion for the cluster of a security. Thank you, House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon Groenewald, we will apply the relevant rule and we will ensure that at the next question session - the next question session these questions are dealt with. I must add, hon members, and some members have raised the point. It is always to the benefit of everyone if this type of arrangements are done before hand.

However, we cannot be stuck at this point because we will not get the reply, and we won’t get the reply from the Deputy Minister either. It would have been correct for the Minister’s office to indicate that there’s a problem, it could have been shared with all the Chief Whips and it would have been unnecessary. However, the rules make provision for this.

There is and the hon Groenewald has indicated to ask the next question. Since the Minister is not available, it’s clear that the Deputy Minister is also not in a position to answer, right. Therefore, we will put both questions. Hon McPherson, I listened to you, Sir, so you must learn the skill of also listening to others, especially the presiding officers. The same will apply to the question that the hon Groenewald has now indicated that at the next question session both those questions will appear on the Order Paper even if is in the different cluster so that the Minister can respond. Hon Marais!

Mr S F J MARAIS: House Chairperson, in the Department of Defence and Military Veterans the Deputy Minister is responsible for military veterans, so he should be able to answer the military veterans’ related questions.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, we have heard what the response was and I’ve made the ruling in that regard. Hon member!

The CHIEF WHIP OF THE OPPOSITION: House Chair, I can understand your ruling as pertained to the question at hand, but the arrangements that we received as was said by the Chief Whip indicates here that the Deputy Minister will respond to questions on the virtual platform. Therefore, what is the point of us getting these instructions about what will happen in the House if the Deputy Minister can choose to say that they can’t answer? Surely, while you made a ruling on the one question we can’t cancel all the questions pertaining to this portfolio.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon members, we will deal with this matter outside of this forum and we will ensure that on the next question day those questions receive necessary attention, and I will inform the Speaker as well of this that has happened. In future it is not an acceptable practice for this type of thing to ... [Inaudible.] ... we will expect that the Ministry is functioning properly and they are prepared to when it comes to questions. I now move to

Question 16 asked by the hon Nkosi to the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation. I’m informed that the Deputy Minister will answer the questions.

Question 16:

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much, hon Chair. South Africa assumed the chairpersonship of Brics on 1 January 2023 and intends, amongst others, to provide strategic leadership to the Brics partnership during our tenure, in close consultations members with other Brics members, based on continuity from previous chess and advancing also South Africa's own foreign policy priorities.

South Africa’s team and priorities as chair of Brics 2023 reflects a strategic focus of South Africa during its tenure. Cabinet has approved the team and priorities after intensive consultation processes that includes government departments, the SA Chapters of the Brics Business Council, Brics Women’s Business Alliance, Brics Think-tank Council and the Brics Civil Forum, to align our tenure as chair of Brics with South Africa’s national interests, and as earlier indicated, with our foreign policy priorities.

We assume this chairpersonship under the team, “Brics in Africa”, a partnership for mutually accelerated growth, sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism. Hon Chair, the team emphasised our vision of breaks as a partnership of leading emerging markets and developing countries, providing leadership momentum and solutions for global growth, sustainable development and inclusion of the global south in the world system.

Our team and priorities, therefore, reflect our principal position that we advance in partnership with others. We need to emphasise that in this regard, we dare not leave the African continent and the global south behind. The team informs our priorities as chair of Brics in 2023, namely: Developing a partnership towards an equitable just transition; transforming education and skills development for the future; unlocking opportunities through the African Continental Free Trade Area; strengthening post-pandemic socioeconomic recovery; entertainment of 2030 agenda on sustainable development; and strengthening multilateralism, including working towards real reform of global governance institutions and strengthening the meaningful participation of women in peace processes.

Brics members have expressed the unequivocal and full support for South Africa as chair of Brics in 2023, for its team and priorities for the Brics partnership. We do submit that this reflects the alignment of South Africa’s strategic vision for the partnership with those of Brics members and the broader global south. Thank you very much.

Mr S H MBUYANE: hon Deputy Minister, there are concerns regarding the slow pace on the question of the reform in the United Nation Security Council and the retreat in terms of the advancement of the agenda and in the developing world. How will the chairing of Brics nations by South Africa enhance the co-operation of the Brics nations to accelerate the issues of the reform in the United Nations Security Council? Thank you very much.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much. I think I have given the indication that one of the key overarching priorities of our chairmanship is indeed the strengthening of multilateralism, which is pivoted obviously on working towards real reform of the global governance institutions. That obviously includes looking at both the United Nations General

Assembly, Unga, its role and relationship with the UN Security Council. The Israeli consensus and the treaty declaration which informed the common Africa position on the reform of the Security Council.

I think, in this regard, we are engaging within Brics. There are two members of the P5 of the United Nations Security Council that serves. We do intend to engage both the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation in relation to advancing the common Africa agenda, so that we actually ensure that the nonpermanent membership gets to be expanded and engaged in a concomitant process on the veto vote of those permanent members. Equally so however, currently we only have three members of Africa, fondly referred to as the A3. The two participate and become the pen holders of the world peace and architecture.

So, I think we are confident that during our chairpersonship, we will find more common ground in relation to the transformation of UN General Assembly and also the transformation of the Security Council. Thank you very much.

Mr N L S NKWANKWA: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Deputy Minister, are there any plans to use the period as chairperson of Brics to boost trade between Brics countries and to also attempt to resolve the conflict between Russia and Ukraine?

Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much hon Chairperson. I think one of the key priorities for the tenureship is found in the team which speaks about Brics and Africa partnership for mutually accelerated growth and sustainable development. That obviously emphasised the unity of purpose amongst a constellation of developing countries, most of which are leading emerging market players, to ensure that the growth do shift to the global south and in particular in the developing countries.

Obviously, as the only member from the African continent, we have an obligation in South Africa to ensure that Africa’s own development trajectory finds expression to Brics. The second issue is that for most assumed the chairpersonship of the African Union during this 2023. One of the key policy priorities for the African Agenda for 2023 is to accelerate

the implementation of your African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

We do envisage that there will be a deepening of partnership between Brics and Africa that will realize and enable mutually beneficial opportunities towards increased trade investment and infrastructure development under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Thank you very much.

Ms C N MKHONTO: I will take it on behalf of hon Nissan.

Deputy Minister, there is a major global realignment taking place at the moment, with the war in Ukraine being the most serious indicator of just how far the US is prepared to go to assert its imperial aspirations in the world.

What practical steps is Brics going to play in protecting his members from the imperial bullying of the US, especially and in relation to the war in Ukraine and the US interference in Taiwan? What are the most immediate steps that Brics can take to end the war in Ukraine, as well as to end US provocation of China and Taiwan? Thanks

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much hon. I think what is what is very important foundation point is: What is South Africa’s equality position in relation to the People’s Republic of China, as it relates to Taiwan, its concerns and the challenges in the Taiwan Strait, for example? I think what is evidently clear is that we do whole day one China policy that holds for Taiwan. It holds for the issues of Hong Kong, etc. So, I think we should be unequivocal about that.

Importantly, the United States of America holds the same view in terms of its foreign policy dispensation officially that they do recognise. Also, a One-China Policy, obviously in terms of actual programmatic implementation of their policy. We are not able to account on that. Secondly, I think what we have suggested is that South Africa is the importance and the centrality of multipolarity in contemporary world politics and geopolitical landscape is key and critical.

We do recognise that there could be anxiety around the fact that you don’t have one universal estimate. So, as we are speaking, the times and the epoch of a unipolar World, I think, have bypass us. We should obviously politely endorse

the issues of multilateralism, where you have a multiplurity of key - what we call big powers in the world.

They’re not necessarily one hell. Our official foreign policy obviously is that the USA is a strategic bilateral partner of South Africa. China is a comprehensive strategic bilateral part of South Africa. I think within that, we obviously seek to drive our foreign policy priorities and, equally so, advance our national interest. Thank you very much

Mr M HLENGWA: Thank you, Chair. Deputy Minister, obviously at this point in time it coincides quite strategically that South Africa on one hand is cheering Brics; while on the other hand, India will be leading the T20 initiatives for 2023. So then, specifically what rodent broader collaboration is there between India and South Africa in these two strategic bodies for the year ahead to ensure that the advancement of the developmental agenda, specifically for every covers on the other hand selfishly for our country for job creation, economic growth and development so that young people, specifically in the technological spaces, can get jobs. Thanks

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much, hon Chairperson, hon members, I think the important issue, obviously, is both developing countries we do anticipate that there will be a common expression of interest in relation to India as a member of Brics advancing those areas that this Brics individual partners are looking at, that include obviously looking at global health infrastructure and what needs to be done for the developing world, including members of the G20, that includes obviously being in sync with one of our key priorities.

For our brick chairpersonship, it is about strengthening your posts pandemic social economic recovery program and how to measure the fact that we have negated on the 2030 SDGs because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We do anticipate that there will be the question raised on developing Finance for your less developed countries your landlocked developed countries and your small island developing States and that includes obviously a substantive number of African States in regards to that.

Question 55:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): House Chair, government views sexual offences and all forms of gender-based violence in an extremely serious light. As hon Horn knows, there has been numerous interventions to prevent and combat gender-based violence in all its forms.

When the information was provided on the 80% backlog of sexual offence cases over a year ago, we were in the grip of COVID- 19, which had a profound impact on the running of our courts and the finalisation of matters, and this led to the historic backlog of cases. Let me also just say that a backlog case in the regional court is a case that has been on the roll for more than nine months. We are pleased to report that on the figures provided by the department as at the end of January, this year, national sexual offences backlog is currently standing at 20,9%, with a further decline from the first quarter to the third quarter. We are working at bringing it down even further to a national target of 15%.

There are many reasons why cases are postponed. Obviously, load shedding, water outages, interpretation services, waiting for DNA reports, malfunctioning court equipments, absence of

prosecutors, private lawyers or Legal Aid lawyers, and other factors. Some of these factors fall within the responsibility of our department, while others are the responsibility of other criminal justice stakeholders. All of these postponement factors are continuously been tracked and monitored so that appropriate interventions can be made where these factors are the responsibility of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. We are indeed improving. Also just to say the regional courts with the highest number of sexual offences backlog are Wynburg, Paarl, Pretoria, Secunda, and Roodepoort.

To combat the challenges of load shedding and water outages, the department has introduced the National Facilities Project for the installation of inverters, generators, solar systems, boreholes, and water tanks in our courts. We have also requested that measures be put in place so that load shedding takes place outside court hours and court days so as not to interrupt justice services.

With regard to repairs to the sexual offences systems, SOS, equipment – that’s the equipment used in the sexual offences court – a contract for the repairs of equipment sexual

offences systems was secured and specified turnaround time for repairs was set. Weekly progress meetings are held with the relevant stakeholders to manage all outstanding repairs. A number of interdisciplinary governance structures of court role-players exist at different court levels to create an integrated response to the elimination of backlog cases of sexual offences in particular. Special attention is being given to provinces and specific courts with the highest number of backlogs. Thank you.

Mr W HORN: Thank you, Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister, in addition to the information you have received, would you be in a position to answer as to the more than 50 000 cases on the backlog roll as at the end of December 2021? How many were finalised, and how many were ultimately withdrawn in order to fix these figures so to speak? In addition to that, would the Deputy Minister be in a position to inform us, given the fact that this government has – as he has indicated – made many bold promises about interventions, some of which have proven to be empty promises, how far the regulations are in respect of the three gender-based violence Bills, which he and his government asked this Parliament to prioritise, which we have signed into law end of January, last year, and which his

department promised that there would be a parallel process to develop the enabling regulations because the only information the portfolio committee has received from the Deputy Minister and the Minister for months now is that these regulations are eminent? Furthermore, the annual performance plan of this government as indicated that 80% sexual offence courts would be designated as such, we still do not see any of them. How do you tie that in with the so-called interventions of this government? Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Deputy Minister, before you respond. Hon members, let us be very clear of what the Rules expect of us during question time. Rule 142(7) says that you cannot ask more than one question. Even though it is your prerogative, hon Deputy Minister, to respond, you are safe, you can respond to one question.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): Thanks, I will try and do my best to all of them, unfortunately, the figures of the withdrawn cases is a new question. I don’t have those statistics with me.

On the other issue of the implementation of the three gender- based violence Bills, two of the Bills are operating and are in effect – the Sexual Offences Amendment Act and the Criminal Laws Amendment Act – One that is outstanding is the Domestic Violence Act. In fact, regulations were tabled and withdrawn. The problem is the issue of the online repository that’s being ready or not being ready. There is supposed to be an online repository of sexual offences orders. That has been the complication. We will probably be asking for the implementation of that Act, except the implementation of that clause, whilst we get to get things sorted out with the IT issues.

On the issue of the designation of the sexual offence courts, the equipping of courts for sexual offence matters is being rolled out. That would be things like separate testifying rooms and various services to try and reduce secondary victimisation. The problem with the legal designation is that the definition – and this came to light later. It was not picked up by us or the portfolio committee – of a regional court, is the regional court of the whole province. So, we can’t designate a specific regional court’s place of sitting. It’s got to be everything. And the regulations for what’s to

be expected of those courts have been gazetted and those apply to specific courts.

In the Judicial Matters Amendment Bill, which is going to be tabled pretty shortly, in Parliament, there is a change to that to allow ... [Inaudible.] ... to be set. [Time expired.] Thanks Chair for your indulgence. I was just responding to hon Horn ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Deputy Minster. Yes, because he asked many questions and you wanted to respond. Hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers, according to Rule 142(8), you have two minutes for the subsequent follow-up questions.

Ms W S NEWHOUDT-DRUCHEN: Hon Deputy Minister, it is very encouraging to hear that the Minister of Police indicated that the DNA backlog has been reduced significantly, and that this would contribute to the fast-tracking of sexual offences, including rape. In addition to this development, will the department consider prioritising finalisation of sexual offences, including the possibility of special courts on this matter? Thank you, House Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): Well, look, we do obviously have special courts for sexual offences with special roles. So, there is a prioritisation, hon member, of sexual offence cases. With regard to the DNA, that has been as a result of the problems of close co-operation between the Sexual Offences and Community Affairs, SOCA, unit of the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, and the police’s forensic science laboratory with regard to getting any outstanding reports, but they are currently quite happy with the relationship with the police, and I feel they are getting those reports. Definitely, sexual offence matters are a priority and do get prioritised in our courts. Thank you.

Ms T BREEDT: Deputy Minister, the Parow sexual offences court racked up a backlog of almost 200 outstanding cases between September 2021 and May 2022 due to the constantly broken recording equipment. As you have mentioned, load shedding is further causing courts to be without electricity for hours on end. You have now clearly mentioned what you are doing to end this crisis. What are the timeframes connected to these interventions, and by when do they foresee the backlog to be successfully addressed? I thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): Hon member, the backlog differs from court to court, for example, I am told that Polokwane sexual offences court has a backlog of one. It is an issue of intervening in specific courts. I didn’t see Parys on the list of the top courts. I think the highest figure, which was for Wynburg was about 190 cases. We would have to check on that, but it is a pity that we weren’t given advance notice of that. Basically, what we are doing is to monitor what is happening in the courts ... Eer ... hon ... I don’t know if I can be protected. It is difficult talking when ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon members, please.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): So, what I was saying is that we do monitor the courts and intervene and sometimes different interventions are needed on a court by court basis. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): The hon members on this side, just don’t entertain what is coming from the other side because it disturbs the member on the podium when he has to respond to questions.

Mr S N SWART: House Chair, the ACDP was concerned about the high levels of backlog for sexual offences. We do welcome the reduction that the Deputy Minister alluded to today. As he indicated or as it is common knowledge, one of the main causes was the DNA backlog, which has now been reduced from a staggering 241 000 to 1 600 cases. That is indeed commendable. The question, Deputy Minster: Is it expected that the DNA Act, which will be implemented this Friday, the 3rd of March, will assist in the apprehension and successful prosecution of, particularly serial sexual offences given that it has been a long time for this Act to be passed that it is now eventually been implemented this Friday? Thank you, House Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): Thanks, hon Swart, yes, obviously increasing the number of people on the DNA database will mean that if they have committed other crimes ... because the people who will be put on that database are people in correctional facilities for committing other crimes. Once their DNA is taken in terms of the new Act, if their DNA is linked to any other crime, particularly sexual offence cases, it will then come up and they can then be hopefully prosecuted for that offence. We are hopeful that it will lead to an improvement. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon members, as per the ruling done by the House Chair Frolick, and in terms of Rule 144(1)(a), the next question will stand over, which is Question 21, the same will apply when we get to Question 50.

Question 23:

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon Chair, it is just that, a training that we have been given is that a, b, c should not be at the same place, at the same time. We must change places. The implementation of the recommendations of the High level Review Panel is a matter that the Director- General of the State Security Agency, SSA, upon her appointment, took as a priority task to be implemented by the SSA top management, under her direct leadership. It should be emphasised that the task of implementing the recommendations of the High Level Review Panel is seen by us as part of services rendered by the agency and its culture of doing the work of the agency, rather than a once-off intervention, informed by the desire to comply and to tick boxes. Therefore, the daily activities of the SAA are taking into account the consideration and implementation of the High Level Review Panel’s recommendations.

The agency is constantly injecting new blood through cadet programmes, which will bring in the new skills relevant to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The agency has also strengthened its recruitment and selection processes, as well as strengthening the existing mechanisms, to ensure career growth and development of members.

The SSA management is also on course towards professionalising the agency and implementing financial management systems in line with the Public Finance Management Act, as well as the review of ministerial delegation of powers and directives.

The agency has also revised its vision and mission statement. The new vision of the agency will ensure that it propels the agency into a future in which it is a provider of reliable and timeous intelligence for a secure South Africa.

Notwithstanding, out of 73 recommendations of the High Level Review Panel, there are 39 recommendations that have fully been implemented and seven which are ongoing.

The Audit and the Risk Committee of the SSA as well as the Internal Audit unit continue to conduct oversite work and

audits on the progress made towards the High level Review Panel Implementation Plan.

On the Expert Panel Report on the July 2021 civil unrest, it is important to mention that the recommendations should jointly be implemented by the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security, JCPS. To this end, there are five recommendations that will be implemented by SSA. I am also happy to report that four of the five recommendations have been fully implemented.

With regard to national early warning capability, the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee, Nicoc, and its early warning systems continue to provide early warnings, in order to avoid a recurrence of the incidents of the July unrest and other potential upheavals in the future. This is done in various departments, working together with various government departments and structures.

In terms of the capacity in SSA, a high number of vacancies at senior management level were filled, including the director- general and DDG’s posts. The filling of vacancies at senior

management level has assisted in bringing stability in the agency.

The National Security policy was presented to the National Security Council that was re-established and which also meets every two months.

On the matter of reorganising the intelligence services, the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Bill was finalised and will be presented to the JCPS before it is presented to Cabinet. One of the objectives of the Bill is to establish a fit-for-purpose domestic as foreign branch. Thank you very much.

Mr J J MAAKE: Chairperson, hon Deputy Minister, I have a follow-up question. In relation to injecting new blood in the agency, it is understandable that the cadets will bring new skills relevant to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. However, what happened in the past has thought us that patriotism – the love for one’s country - is better. How does the Deputy Minister or the Minister intend to instil patriotism in the agency, especially in the new recruits? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Chair, the Chairperson of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence, JSCI, the Intelligence Academy has developed a programme, called the National Security and Intelligence Management. One of the modules of this programme is called the Articulation of National Security Content. The National Security Content has the following: National Identity, National Values, National Interest, National Power, and National Will.

Further, the philosophical framework, on the other hand is a body that ties everyone and everything within the Intelligence Academy. It is about a set of principles, values, standard practices and ethical codes applicable to the workforce inside the Intelligence Academy. Thank you very much.

Mr M HLENGWA: Hon House Chair, hon Deputy Minister, the report, of course, has a host of recommendations and many of them also are dependent on the functionality and infrastructure of the agency, including but limited to access to electricity. What is the impact of load shedding on the implementation of this plan and what plans are in place to mitigate against this risk, which will be with us for quite a while and also, in the absence of the appointment of the much

awaited Minister of Electricity? However, there is fundamental and substantial risk on the training, on the Fourth Industrial Revolution capabilities that you want to build up. So, what is the impact of load shedding and what confidence do we have that the plan will be successfully implemented, noting that fundamental risk?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): You have asked four questions.

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon Chairperson, I will only answer one question. That one question, I think, is at the top of the National ... [Inaudible.] ... picture, which we have presented in another committee – the issue about energy security. The issue about energy security to us constitutes It has reached a point of it being a national security.

Regarding our participation with Nicoc and a number of structures that are dealing with issues of load shedding at Eskom, we are at the centre, as the State Security Agency. For example, there is a committee that was deployed at Eskom to deal with these issues, since last year December. They especially deal with issues of sabotage, issues of corruption

within the supply chain, to make sure that the issues, as raised by a number of other reports about the issues at Eskom

... [Inaudible.] ... country to restore and make sure that the generation and transmission are lowered and reduce the levels of load shedding in the country. Thank you.

Ms N W A MAZZONE: Hon Chairperson, Deputy Minister, you see that I am standing, as you have stood for us. I will show you respect. We now know that this famous report has been released, but let me quote from this particular report: “We recall that, while security services informed us about intelligence reports that they have claimed to submit to various clients, we did not have sight of these classified documents.”

Minister, therefore, these reports lack critical information to provide the necessary information that are, in fact, going to be used to stop future unrest. Therefore, my question is: When items are in the public domain and fall within public interests, certainly, we must now put pressure on SSA to break these silos that have been created, one of them so obviously now by Arthur Fraser, starting a court case himself against the government and against the sitting President, certainly,

given the fact that the report states they could not see in information, because it classified ... [Time expired.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon Chair, one of the things that we will always avoid at the agency is a destraction to discuss intelligence matters in the public.

Some of the distractions will be people taking the agency to court and that we must go and ventilate those issues in court, which by their very nature are operational matters.

We will respect the craft itself, because the craft does require tht we must respect and it is one of these methodologies. And therefore, I will not venture too much on the question that you are raising, except to say we remain focussed on our work, as defined in terms of our doctrine of what we need to do – collecting, providing and sharing intelligence with relevant law enforcement agencies. Thank you.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Hon Chairperson Deputy Minister, how many senior officials? One has been fired, two were reported to the police, three are held accountable for intelligence failures,

corruption, since this High Panel Review Report on SSA. How many, specifically.

The DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Chair, with the

seriousness of some of the allegations that came to the Zondo Commission, we now have an office of ID inside, instead of them being outside, so that the exchange of documents that sometime can be very complicated, in terms of the requirements of the Intelligence Service Act. We take it very seriously.

There are a number of cases that we opened with the police and a number of cases that are before the Hawks, a number of cases that are with the NPA. We hope that progress will be made soon. We hope that the work that the ID is doing internally will help to facilitate and fast-track expeditiously some of the issues that came from the Zondo Commission. Thank you very much.

Mr M HLENGWA: Chairperson, this is on a separate matter. May I crave your indulgence.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): No, no indulgence. It must be a point of order.

Mr M HLENGWA: Chairperson, on a point of order: I am not one to entertain petty inferences in this House, but for the record, the presiding officers know that when we are in this venue, I do not stand for questions if I am addressing the microphone because I am not audible. The inference that have been made that I am speaking out of disrespect by not standing is wrong.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): I understood why you were seated and we did agree previously, hon members. You may be seated. Please, don’t take your discussions that you have there that I don’t hear and then you bring it to us. No, please.

*Afrikaans*:

Moenie so ’n ding doen nie. Asseblief. Wag,wag.

Question 29:

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson, we are here to answer the question asked by the hon member.

The Minister of Police did not authorise the entry of the SA Police Service members into the Joint Sitting of Parliament during the state of the nation address, Sona, on the 9th

February 2023 in accordance with the National Key Point Act, Act 2 of 1980. Any National Key Point should have a protection force. Therefore, the national Parliament of the Republic of South Africa is protected by the SAPS. Thank you very much, Chairperson.

Mr H A SHEMBENI: Thank you, hon Minister, there are numerous court judgements that speaks to the sanity of Parliament and how this institution must never be used by executive to assert their power and to refuse to be held to account. These judgements are specifically against having members of the SA Police Service enter the Parliamentary Chamber to remove or arrest Members of Parliament. The SAPS breached these laws on the 9th of February and had armed men enter the Chamber to remove Members of Parliament. If you did not order this, what action have you taken to all those who ordered the police entry into the Chamber accountable for their actions? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Thank you very much, hon Chairperson, as hon member Shembeni specifically referred the decision of the court. I don’t think that the decisions of the court are about the Constitution, unless they order the change of the

Constitution. The standing authority of the members of the SA Police is derived from section 205 subsection 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa thus reads:

The objectives of the police service are to prevent, combat and investigate crime, to maintain public order, to protect and to secure the inhabitance of the Republic and the property and to uphold and enforce the law.

The police can explain later, but if one of these things is happening their authority is derived from the Constitution that they must act as such if somebody has some answers late. So this is the instruction standing authority according to the police decision. They felt that one of these, they had to respond to. It was based on section 205 subsection 3 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Thank you.

Mr M A MOLEKWA: Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson, can the Minister elaborate more on the co-operation between the SAPS and Parliamentary Protection Services? Are there any significant challenges that hampers effective co-operation and co-ordination of security related services rendered on their parliamentary precinct or extension thereof between the SAPS

and the Parliamentary Protection Services? Thank you, Chairperson.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Chairperson, the responsibility for Parliamentary Protection Services is to respond, but beyond that is a responsibility of the South African Police Service to act and intervene in whatever level so long it is within the Republic of South Africa. They might be invited, they might see to it that it has gone beyond the powers of the PPS and as such they act. There is nothing wrong that stops them to act if something happens. That is exactly the point I make that if that is the way they see things, they can answer later. But the Constitution instructs them to act as they have acted together with other agencies, including the PPS. Thanks.

M.Gen O S TERBLACHE: Minister on the 9th of February the EFF illegally stormed the stage, but ... [Interjections.] ... listen! Listen! They only displayed posters. Minister, why did the SAPS find it necessary to deploy armed police officials in Parliament during the Joint Sitting in contravention with the rules? What security risk occurred, but the Parliamentary Protection Services were unable to help? Who approved this? Is there somebody? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Chairperson, I have read the authority where the police have derived from their authority of doing it. It is section 205 subsection 3 if the member can continue to read that. But where it is said that nobody was armed, the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa does have a history of an incident where the Prime Minister was killed in the House. So, there supposed to be proactive of the police that happened on that day should be part of the prevention and protection of the inhabitance, as that is instructed by the Constitution. Who instructed it? I repeat, is a standing authority derived from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa for the police to act on these matters as they have been read. That authority on that particular day was derived from there. Besides that, Parliament itself is a protected area because it is a key point. All key points are protected and there must be response should there be anything that comes close in any form of giving the intention or the problem that might be there in that particular institution - that is what happened on that particular day.

Ms Z MAJOZI: Thank you, hon Chairperson and hon Minister, what is the framework in place in the Department of Police which allows the Speaker to call on South African Police Service

members without your involvement? I am the member of the committee, I would like you to quote for me, in what framework does it allow the Department of Police that Speaker can call on the SAPS? Thanks.

*IsiZulu:*

USIHLALO WENDLU (Nk M G Boroto): Hhayi bo, thulani sifuna ukumuzwa sonke uNgqongqoshe. Thulani!

*English:*

The MINISTER OF POLICE: Chairperson, the House has got its own rules and those rules whether they are Parliament, Judiciary, Concord are overruled by the Constitution. I repeat, this is derived from the Constitution. Nobody either of the three - what you call the state that is your government, your Judiciary your Parliament - can be above the Constitution that is derived from there. But also, Chairperson, it must be explained that the instruction of operations does not come from the Minister of Police. It comes from the National Commissioner of the South African Police and the Minister oversees and directs. Those rules of the Parliament will be there, but they cannot surpass, be over or suppress the

authority of the Constitution. I repeat this was derived from the authority of the Constitution 205 subsection 3. Thanks.

The HOUSE CHAIRPESON (Ms M G Boroto): Thank you, hon Minister that was the last follow up question to this Question 29.

Question 38:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Chairperson, the Department of Home Affairs would like to provide services to South Africans seven days a week. Hence we are currently drafting new legislation that will regulate conditions of employment for our employees and open daily, except on public holidays. This will also cater for learners and walkers who will ordinarily not be able to get time off from work to visit Home Affairs offices.

The mobile units are being sent to far-flung areas to services citizens per province following a deployment plan and also a high impact programme where there’s a huge number of people who are undocumented. And to do this, we have grown our mobile units from 100 in the previous financial years, we added 10 in the other financial year, 20 just this past financial year and

another 100 that we are introducing in the current financial year. Thank you, Chairperson.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon House Chair, as you know that the Independent Electoral Commission, IEC, is busy with a project to target young people to register as voters and one of the problems that they are experiencing is that young voters, and there are millions of them, don’t have an Identity Document, ID, book.

So, we welcome this but we would like to know from the Deputy Minister if there can’t be a targeted approach? The Deputy Minister, for example, can say that they will target 100 schools in so many days and they will register so many learners to get the ID documents. Thank you very much, House Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chairperson, we already have a targeted campaign to ensure that we go to schools and register young learners from the ages of 16 for them to get their documentation. The Minister has delegated this function specifically to myself.

But we do not just only go to schools, we have a ... [Inaudible.] ... in the Department of Home Affairs that takes time during weekends to volunteer to register those young people.

We are currently drafting a targeted campaign to make sure that all the learners receive their Identity Documents when they turn 16 years and also to make sure that it assists for the purposes of registering to vote and increasing the numbers that are required by the IEC. Thank you, Chairperson.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Deputy Minister, I don’t know why are you in the podium.

So, Deputy Minister, these suggested measures for opening on weekends while noble will not resolve the central problem with Home Affairs. The central problems relate to Information and Communications Technology, ICT, challenges and corrupt officials, and this leads to excessively long queues at your offices.

By when will you deal with technical and staff problems that lead to long queues at departmental offices? Thank you, Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: I’m in the podium because the Minister had technical challenges and because we work well together I’m able to stand here and answer.

The issues that we are dealing with when it comes to Home Affairs are that our challenges are not only ICT. We had a huge problem with regard to our staff complement and our COE cap. That issue has been resolved with Treasury. And that is why you will see quite a number of job adverts being advertised for Home Affairs, which increases our ground soldiers on the floor.

We acknowledge that there would have been delays as a result of manual records, hence the project announced by the President on digitization that is resulting to the employment of quite a substantial number of young people is going to contribute in dealing with our problems.

We have gone, in as far as ICT is concerned, looked at partnerships with banks and other institutions that deal with data to help us resolve the issues at the backend of our system.

We are already piloting something that will revolutionise how we offer services by modernising a number of our offices that are currently on the legacy problem; that will change things around. Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr A C ROOS: Deputy Minister, over five years after Home Affairs offices closed on Saturdays there is no progress on the promise to reopen it. Because offices are closed on Saturdays, people take leave to queue in the week and even with the booking system and hope that the system is not offline, if it is, then they take another day’s leave. Weekend pay has been given as an excuse, but overtime and additional funding have been made available over last few years for dealing with various backlogs and digitisation processes at Home Affairs.

So, will the Deputy Minister come clean with the public and admit that he has no intention of reopening Home Affairs

offices on Saturdays, because you just don’t care about the affected people? Thank you, Chairperson.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chairperson, actually we do care quite a lot.

Two weeks ago, hon Roos, we were sitting down planning on how to open these offices on Saturdays. So, we have not just committed, we have started the programme of engaging labour because this is a labour matter; that you cannot just take a decision without engaging labour. Hence we are engaging labour and we’ll continue to do so and very soon we will have the results and then you will have something else to cry about.

Thank you, Chairperson.

Ms L L Van der MERWE: Deputy Minister, you just spoke about expanding the access to documentation for South Africans, but with more IDs come more fake IDs and the fact of the matter is your department is crippled with corruption.

The Presidency recently revealed that more 40 000 fraudulent IDs were used to renew vehicle licenses. But this is just a

tip of the iceberg because we know that far too many noncitizens are carrying fake South African documents.

So, hon Deputy Minister, in relation to first time identity card applicants, what measures are your department going to take to ensure that there is no opportunity for fraud or corruption when these documents are issued? And what are you doing, in general, to ensure that you identify and deal with the prevalence of fake IDs in circulation? Thank you, Chair.

*Afrikaans*:

Die HUISVOORSITTER (Me M G Boroto): Nee man! Wat is dit nou?

*IsiNdebele*:

... ngiyanibawa ...

Bab’uMashigo ...

*English*:

... there is a rule about gestures for this House. I’ve been seeing that hand and that finger for too long, please.

*IsiNdebele*:

Godu ngiyanibawa nani lapho khenithuleni.

*English*:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Chair, we have had problems in the main with the green-barcoded IDs, which were easy to fraud. But with our Smart ID Card and the technology that we have invested in it, it makes it very difficult.

We understand that there has been instances where our passports have been defrauded, but mainly, in collaboration with the people who work for Home Affairs. And that is why we had the Unit of Counter Corruption and Fraud to deal with those apples amongst us who are rotten. And that unit has actually proven to be successful with the operations that we have all seen in the media, arresting people who have been assisting people to get wrong identification. But our Smart ID Cards are safe and we can guarantee them that they will continue to be safe for the longest of time, they also adhere to international standards.

With regard to the backlog of those that got their identity, as soon as we migrate everyone to the Smart ID Card system, all those that got their documents fraudulently in the form of

the green-barcoded IDs will eventually fall off. So, it’s going to be a great one, exercise. But our commitment to fighting corruption and fraud within the department has proven to yield results through the operations that we’ve been running, which I’m sure all of us have seen. Thank you, Chair.

Question 14:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: House Chair, the

Zimbabwean Exemption Permit was given for Zimbabwean nationals who were in South Africa illegally, but could prove that they have a job, are studying or running a business. It was a special permit, which was issued because most of the people affected had applied for asylum, but the numbers were so huge such that they were overwhelming the system and we could not process them using ordinary legislation.

Two countries were also issued special permits for the same reasons. This was Angola’s Special Permit which has since been terminated. We also have the Lesotho Special Permit which will expire on 31 December 2023. Those are the only other two.

Thank you.

Ms M A MOLEKWA: Hon Deputy Minister, what are the implications should the deadline not be met? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: We have given an opportunity for the holders of the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit, what is known as ZEP to apply for alternative Visas. Those who do not do so by the deadline will have to voluntarily go home or face deportation as they would not be having legal papers to stay here.

Ms T A KHANYILE: Deputy Minister, essentially the ZEPs were issued as Home Affairs could not process the number of refugee applications that time. Nothing much has changed since then with Home Affairs dragging its heels processing asylum applications. The Minister indicated in a Home Affairs Portfolio Committee meeting on 18 February 2020 that, Home Affairs would hear the 68-year Refugee Appeal Board backlog in four years. With only one year to clear this backlog, what is the progress and by when will this backlog be cleared?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: I must make one thing absolutely clear. It is not everyone who applies for asylum who actually qualifies for asylum. The large spike that we

faced which resulted in us being inundated with applications, were in the main economic migrants who in some way wanted to abuse our asylumseeker regime. We are now in a project that we are running with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR to clear that particular backlog.

Part of the reason why we then had the ZEP is because we could identify that others do not qualify for asylum or refugee status. Hence, we then had this special permit which was called the ZEP, which is now coming to an end. Thank you.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Deputy Minister how many permanent residency visas have been issued to Americans and Europeans? And when arriving in South Africa, they get visas on arrival for how many months?

*IsiZulu*:

Ngubani lo othi ...

*English*:

... “what” when I’m talking? I’m not talking to you; I’m asking a question here to the Deputy Minister.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: I do not have the total number of Americans who have received visas. We are willing to provide that information to the House and give you the accurate numbers. But we do not apply any form of discrimination when we’re vetting visas on the basis of where a person comes from. We look at the requirements. If you meet the requirements, you then get access. The issue of the visas on arrival is part of what we’re striving towards, because all global countries are moving towards this direction, where it is easier to attract skills and easier to attract tourists into the country.

Ms L L van der MERWE: Chairperson as I’ve said many times before, the reality is that Africa faces a full scale immigration crisis. There are millions of undocumented migrants within our borders who are not legally permitted to work or live here. And this department seems unable to address this crisis. To make this matter worse, your own department Deputy Minister recently revealed that up to 40% of visas issued by your department have been fraudulently issued, whether work, residency investment study permits, up to 40% of them are fraudulently issued.

So hon Deputy Minister, what progress if any have you made since the tabling of this visa fraud report more than seven months ago, to deal with deep-rooted corruption within your department? And how far have you gone and revoking some of these visas that have been fraudulently issued by your own officials working with syndicates? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: The immigration crisis is not a problem of South Africa; it is a global problem. If you look at the global risk report, it places immigration at the top 10 of both immediate and long-term risks that the globe would have to deal with. If we come to South Africa, we acknowledge that we did expose corruption that was happening within the visa offices, and we dealt with that. As I’m speaking to you right now, there are officials who are sitting at home because of the action that we’ve taken. Beyond that, we have made sure that we recapacitate the department.

Currently as I’m speaking we’ve added about 18 other visa adjudicators, fresh and with one of them is awaiting vetting. All the other ones have gone through vetting. So we are taking the issue seriously, and we’re dealing with it. Part of the reason that we had the visa backlog that we were complaining

about, is because we had to recalibrate our systems in order to be corruption proof so that we can know that the visas that we’re issuing are legitimate.

*IsiZulu*:

USIHLALO WENDLU (Nk M G Boroto): Sithokoze, mhlonishwa. Isitulo ungasishiya manje. Sekuphelile, baba.

*English*:

Thank you very much. Order! Thank you. Order! We now

*IsiZulu*:

He-e mani, nenzani kanti.

Question 24:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): House Chair, my apologies for stepping out when things moved faster. The question is on the Witness Protection Unit and the review of legislation pertaining to whistle- blowers protection encompasses the current legislation on witness protection. As part of our review, we have identified immediate measures to address capacity challenges. The

appointment of the head of the Witness Protection Unit is receiving our attention.

The Witness Protection Unit has a current vacancy of 17% which is above the acceptable level of vacancies in the public service, which is 10% in the recruitment driving process. The budget of the Witness Protection Unit requires supplementation in order to ensure that the unit delivers on its mandate. The budget allocation to the NPA will include a portion of these funds for the Witness Protection Unit with the budget allocation being R805 million over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF period, which include an additional budget of R72 million.

An additional request for Criminal Assets Recovery Account, CARA funding in the amount of R150 million over the MTEF period is being prepared for consideration. These allocations will assist in the capacitation of the Witness Protection Unit and upon completion of the legislative preview which will be casted, further request may be made. Thank you.

Ms N H MASEKO-JELE: Thank you very much, House Chairperson. Thank you, Deputy Minister. The protection of whistle-blowers requires collaboration with the police ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): If you can just put the mic here. Don’t look at him, just concentrate. [Laughter.]

Ms N H MASEKO-JELE: Thank you, Chair. I was saying that the protection of whistle-blowers requires collaboration with the police. So my follow up question would be, what are the engagements if any with the police to strengthen the protection of whistle-blowers? Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): The Witness Protection Act is about witnesses. So, those are the people who are going to be testifying in court, in tribunals, commission of inquiry, that kind of thing. It is up to the prosecution to decide whether the person should be put on the programme. It is quite onerous because the programme entails effective relocation. You move out. You are no longer at your address, and it’s something that not many people want to do. So the gap, as I would see it, is in the issue of protection for people who don’t want to be on the

programme, which currently would be provided for, by the police, I think after security assessment. But, that is where things need to be strengthened with the police.

But as far as witness protection programme itself, maybe just to say that in the first three quarters of the year, there were 327 witnesses on the programme together with 254 associated people, that would be family members, etc. of the witnesses. Currently, the numbers have gone down to a 199 witnesses and a 163 associated persons. So, that gives a sense of the numbers of people on that programme. But the problem is that it is not suitable for everybody. It means leaving your current position and relocating. Thank you.

Adv G BREYTENBACH: Thank you, House Chair. Hon Deputy Minister, pity that your Minister, yet again, couldn’t make it. Of course it is important that we embark on a review aimed at the fortification of anti-corruption legal framework. We need to better protect whistle-blowers as much more urgent than for it to be handled as a broad review, which in your hands will take years. The original question of hon Maseko- Jele follows on a confirmation by the National Director of Public Prosecutions, NDPP more or less a year ago really, that

the NPA holds the view that some politicians ... [Inaudible.]

... regulations with directives to the mandate of the Witness Protection Unit, can immediately enable better whistle-blowers protection. Why hasn’t this been done?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): As the hon member would know, reviewing legislation is not an easy job. This House, in the last Parliament, asked to the amendment to the protection of Whistle-Blowers Act, and now this issue is being raised and other aspects should have been looked at. Some of which were considered at the time. So, it rather than doing it a piece meal, the issue is to do a broader review, and a lot of work have been done. There was a study trip that the members of the NPA, officials from the Department of Justice, and I speak under correction, but also the police went to Canada, where for example, they don’t make the distinction as I understand it, between witnesses and whistle-blowers. They treat everybody the same. So, it’s an issue of looking at what is best to be done. Thank you.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Deputy Minister, last year Babita Deokaran was assassinated after she blew the whistle on the massive

corruption that was taking place at the Gauteng Heath Department. She is one of the many that lost their jobs or their lives after speaking out against corruption, particularly corruption that involves senior members of the ruling party. What assurances can you give to many who wants to blow the whistle on corruption but are scared that they will be the next Babita and perish like her?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES (Mr J

H Jeffery): It is important that people who have knowledge of crime being committed, in particular corruption, do come forward, and it is important that they are protected. I don’t want to go into the facts of Ms Deokaran’s matter, but she was working with the Special Investigating Unit, SIU and that is covered by the Witness Protection Act. But, I don’t know the issue of relocation and going on that programme was raised with her, but it probably would not have been what she wanted. The issue is ensuring that proper threat assessments are done and then protection is provided to people. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): There was no request for the fourth supplementary question. Thus taking us to the next question. Thank you, hon Deputy Minister.

Question 17:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. To date, 54 African states have signed the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA, agreement, of which 44 have ratified this legal instrument, including South Africa. This is an outstanding achievement, given the complexities of negotiating this agreement.

Hon members, this will bring about the largest free trade area, and it will bring together the 55 countries of the African Union, AU, and eight Regional Economic Communities, RECs. We are submitting that this accomplishment wouldn’t be possible without the political leadership and the commitments of heads of state and government of the AU, more specifically, the support of those countries that have already ratified the agreement, including South Africa.

South Africa will continue to utilise all statutory meetings of the AU, including the Council of Ministers of Trade Com, the executive council and the assembly of heads of state and government of the AU, to advocate for the early universalisation of the African Continental Free Trade

agreement. It will also encourage those that have yet to ratify the agreement, to do so as soon as possible.

Furthermore, South Africa will utilise her bilateral engagement to encourage those eight countries that have not yet ratified the agreement to do so, including Madagascar, that remains the only country in the Southern African Development Community, SADC, region, that is still to rectify the agreement. Thank you very much.

Mr S H MBUYANE: Thank you, Chairperson, and thanks Deputy Minister. Deputy Minister, we are aware that there is an African Continental Free Trade Area Business Forum that will

be taking place from the 16 to the 19 April 2023. *Can the* Deputy Minister clarify that we will be able to use this event in terms of advocating and lobbying other countries there for ratification agreement? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much. Yes, the AfCFTA Secretariat is organising the first Tujenge Pamoja Africa Business Forum which is to convene from 8 to 10 March 2023. Some of its key priorities are as follows: Firstly, to create

awareness among African business community of current business and investment opportunities, in particular, the matter of regional value chains.

Secondly, to provide a space for government investor engagement to unlock trade and investment funding for priority

value chain. Thirdly, to advocate for supportive policies and investments for priority value chain. Fourthly, to engage on the one trade house marketplace where announcements, signings, investment pitches, and partner booths for perfect integration will be relined.

Lastly, Chairperson, to promote a business-friendly

environment for small and medium-sized enterprises*,* SMEs, women, and youth empowerment. So, substantively, those

business forums will, amongst others, seek to heighten opportunity dividends from the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement. Thank you very much.

Mr W F FABER: Thank you, Chairperson. I will take this question. Deputy Minister, if the African Continental Free Trade agreements are fully realised, 15 million people could escape extreme poverty by 2035, and the real income could rise

by 9%. Why has South Africa not done more to take ... [Interjections.]

Mr N SINGH: Chairperson, I am sorry.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Yes, hon Singh. You can’t hear, neh?

Mr N SINGH: Yes, we can’t hear.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon member, can you move closer to the mic?

Mr W F FABER: I am sorry, Chair. Let me try again. Deputy Minister ... [Interjections.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Can we restart the time, please. I wanted to ask you to go near the mic, but I didn’t want to disturb you. So, if the virtual platform members can’t hear, then we have to redo it. Thank you.

Mr W F FABER: I am sorry, Chairperson. If the African Continental Free Trade agreements are fully realised,

15 million people could escape extreme poverty by 2035, and the real income could rise by 9%. Why has South Africa not done more to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade agreement, as intra-African exports could grow by 109%, led by the manufactured goods? Why has our government still not used this as a game changer after now, and what will be done, Deputy Minister?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much, hon Chairperson. I think that, our view, obviously, is that the operationalisation of the African Continental Free Trade agreement commenced in 1 January 2023. Hon Chairperson, obviously, our issue is that, South Africa has benefited since the minimum ratification.

For an example, we have given an indication during the state of the nation address debate that, historically, in 2021, we exported an amount of R355 billion to the EU as a bloc, and because of our African Continental Free Trade agreement, for the very first time in 2021, hon Chair, we exported more to Africa than to the EU as a bloc. Our export to Africa stood at

R385 billion, a contrast to that, is for our export to the EU as a bloc, which could be R355 billion.

What I can tell the hon members here is that, there is a validation of the export figures along the same lines for 2022. Furthermore, we do anticipate that we are going to economically, leap frog forward, using the African Continental Free Trade agreement as a catalyst to bring about inclusive prosperity for the South Africans. Thank you very much.

Mr M HLENGWA: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Deputy Minister, obviously, the documentation of the Free Trade Area means that, there is item movement of money, and we all know the problem that we have concerning money-laundering. Closer to home, South Africa has been grey listed. What does this mean now, in terms of administering confidence which has been the champion of the Free Trade Area?

Secondly, what measures are you contemplating putting in place to be able to deal with this particular dilemma that has besieged South Africa because, quite frankly, in action, it does bring these kinds of consequences? I ask these questions

because now, we are championing free trade, and yet, we have been grey listed as a country. Thank you, Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Thank you very much, hon member. Hon members, I think that our statement on grey listing was unequivocal. We are committing as a government to respond to the efficiencies that has been identified, and we do anticipate that there will be cross collaboration by the

various departments, including the Financial Intelligence Centre, FIC, the National Treasury, the Reserve Bank, etc.

This will ensure that, come the next review period, obviously,

we are able to conform to the requirements of the financial action task team. Also, the one important issue that we are

engaging on, is the role of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, PAPSS. I think that the hon members will

appreciate what the Abuja Treaty has envisaged about this Continental Free Trade agreement.

However, ordinarily, it should have its foundation, also a Pan-African outlook in terms of the Financial Payment and Settlement System, and that is, obviously, why the African

Union and the assembly in others, actually confirmed that, during the year 2023, we should do everything in our powers to accelerate the building blocks for the radical implementation of this Continental Free Trade agreement. Thank you very much.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): *Thank* you. There was no request for the fourth supplementary question. We are now release you, hon Deputy Minister, back to your chair. Hon members, before we get to the next question, the requests for follow up questions were made up to Question 17 that we just did. So, what is going to happen is that, as they respond, we will take the first supplementary question because it is from the person who asks the question.

We are also going to allow members to, by show of hands, request that. We will also consider the members that are on the virtual platform because, the time for questions is three hours, so, we will still have the whole 25 minutes. Therefore, you are right, hon Nzuza, it is Question 39, asked by hon Roos.

Question 39:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Chairperson, yes, we did accumulate a lot of backlog during the state of disaster as some services such as applications for permanent and temporary residence were closed due to the fact that international travel was suspended. In addition, to adhere to COVID-19 regulations, we had to drastically reduce staff on duty to enable social distancing. This resulted took a backlog of 40 365 accumulating with us.

Now, what is the plan to address this backlog? As I've indicated, because I think hon Roos thought we are not going to get to this question and asked it, so now I'm answering for the second time. We have appointed 19 additional adjudicators,

18 of them are started today, and one of them is still undergoing vetting. However, they will spend the first 30 days mostly in training whilst assisting them to be able to tackle the backlog. What we also did was to rope in managers from provinces who were mobilised to help with quality control. We are currently reviewing the immigration permitting delegations, as well as the standard operating procedures.

All those systems are in place for us to reduce the backlog.

Mr A C ROOS: Deputy Minister, so in a response to a follow-up to Question 15 by hon Mulder, you stated that COVID-19 is responsible largely for the visa backlog, but that's not entirely true is it? In the Home Affairs Q1 and Q2 performance reports for the current financial year, after COVID-19, only one in 20 critical skills, business and work visas were adjudicated on time.

A shocking total of 132 visas in six months. This pathetic performance is detrimental to foreign investment and skills attraction and is costing us jobs, but for the second Sona in a row, President Ramaphosa, once again, announced the digital nomad visa and announced the DA policy of a point-based visa system to attract investment and create much-needed jobs. What are your plans to urgently implement these job-creating visa categories?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: House Chairperson, when we are dealing with the backlog, what you must understand, you prioritise those that came in first and then those that came in last day become last. So it becomes like a rolling ball. I think we can spend time vulnerable, hon Roos, for you to understand how you deal with the backlog, and then the other

issue I want us to venture into is that as the Department of Home Affairs, we have two responsibilities. We don't just wake up in the morning and say, everybody who has applied must get a visa. We have a responsibility to balance the security interest of the country with the economic interest of this country. Security interest, means doing thorough checks and proper assessments of the applications that we receive, that is what allows us to be able to play that particular balance

The additional staff that we're putting up is primarily not just to deal with the backlog but also so that in future we can easily adjudicate. Some of the systems that we have put in place are the e-visa system where we're continuously growing the number of countries that we are taking in through the e- visa system. So it's not true that we are not dealing with the issues and the commitments that have been made by the President. Thank you

Ms L L VAN DER MERWE: Deputy Minister, we spoke previously about the fact that your department has admitted that up to 40% of visas issued by your department are fraudulent. Have you suspended those visas that you have cited as possibly having been fraudulently issued, pending a review, or are

those permits still active? Can you give us those details, please?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: House Chair, as and when we discover the fraudulent visa, we shut it down. Thank you.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Singh, we had hon Van der Merwe from the IFP. Can we get ... unless there's nobody else, but we do have hon Chabane from the House.

Mr M S CHABANE: Deputy Minister, acknowledging that there are challenges on the backlog of ... what are the intervention plans and the budget allocated to respond to these challenges? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: House Chair, we are dealing with two sets of backlogs. The first one has to do with the refugee and asylum seeker regime. We are very grateful to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR, which has given us access to funding and skills and competencies to deal with that particular backlog. As I've indicated, on the visa regimes, we have the 18 staff that started today, but also our investment has been allowed by the

budget gives us space to increase our technological capacity to deal with the backlog and also advance in the future. Thank you.

*IsiNdebele*:

USIHLALO WENDLU (Kkz M G Boroto): Kunabantu abakhulumako, ngibezwa ngihlezi la. Angifunukuzwa indaba zenu, ngiyanibawa!

*IsiZulu*:

Mnu A V KHOZA: Yebo, Sihlalo, ngicela ukubuza la uSekela Ngqongqoshe, kunesinqumo la esisanda kuthathwa yinkantolo ukuthi laba bashokobezi base-Afghanistan enabanqabela ukuthi bangene la bangangena ngenkani. Uma inkantolo inquma ukuthi makungene abashokobezi la bazohlala ngenkani nibe ninqabile nina.

*English*:

What impact does that going to have on state security if our courts can allow avowed terrorists to be forcefully accepted into South Africa against what you had decided as the department? Thank you.

*IsiZulu*:

USEKELA NGQONGQOSHE WEZASEKHAYA: Sihlalo weNdlu, angikholwa lungu elihloniphekile ukuthi singavuka ekuseni sibize abantu ngabashokobezi singakaze sibaphenye ukuthi bangashokobezi.

*English*:

Calling people terrorists without having information if they are terrorists. As a department, we respect decisions that are taken by the courts of this country. The court says that we must allow them to apply for asylum and we can follow that particular process where they apply. We also have an option of appealing. We are assessing our options and as soon as we have assessed our options we will then take the necessary action.

Question 27:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Hon House Chairperson, in regards to the question, the answer is as follows: The monthly rental amount that the Department of International Relations and Co- operation, Dirco, is paying to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure is R3 237 637,11. The average monthly utility consumption for the premises paid by Dirco to the managing agent of the premises for the 2022-23 financial year was R438 248. The Department of International Relations and

Co-operation’s records reflect that we have paid an amount of R30 million to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure in February 2009 for the Pan African Parliament project. Thank you very much.

Mr A V KHOZA: We wish to find out, Minister, as to why is this building ...

*IsiNdebele:*

USIHLALO WENDLU (Ksz M G Boroto): Mhlonitjhwa Khoza, jama kancani.

*English:*

Hon Matumba, please mute. You may restart, hon Khoza.

Mr A V KHOZA: Hon House Chairperson, the question is why is the department not considering acquiring, as in purchasing, this building or any other similar building for that matter, because if you compare rental over a longer period of time it would cost more than you would have spent purchasing? Is the department considering or not considering purchasing a building? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Hon House Chair, the penholder on the acquisition of assets, especially property, remains the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure. The Department of International Relations and Co-operation is the department that interface on the policy imperatives of making sure that the commitments that we have made to have the Pan African Parliament hosted by South Africa gets to be fulfilled.

What I want to suggest is that the matter of property modalities and the type of architecture that we must engage on to ensure that we are able to do good on our commitments is one that our sister department, the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, could substantively respond to. Thank you very much.

Mr M HLENGWA: House Chairperson, to the Deputy Minister, you have fought tooth and nail to host the Pan African Parliament in South Africa as far back as 2010. It is now 2023 when we are still renting. On top of that it just speaks to the integrity of the asset register of the department. New York is one example where you bought a building not knowing what is there and it was bungled by corruption. So, ultimately, Deputy

Minister, what concrete plans are there to actually move out of renting and save the taxpayer R3,2 million per month that you are paying in rent? It is not sustainable, and from 2010 to date, the fact that there is no movement is indicative that you had no plan when you lobbied to host. It was a vanity project as one colleague in the House has put it a few weeks ago. Thank you, House Chair.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Hon House Chair, let me just first indicate that the acquisition process as it relates to the property aspect of New York did not have any corrupt act pertaining to it. There has been no criminal charges or assertions made in the public that there has been undue financial benefits to either a member of the Foreign Service or a public servant or the embassy in New York or any other private person. So, there has been absolutely no corrupt aspect that has been validated.

What has happened is that there has been subsequent investigations around the issue on irregular financial conduct, and I think Minister Pandor has subsequently reported to the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Co-

operation with regards to that issue. What we are now looking at and we are taking very well is the recommendation that we need to urgently engage in dialogue with Minister de Lille to have permanent infrastructure for hosting the Pan African Parliament, due to the economic consequences if we continue renting as opposed to having physical infrastructure owned by the Pan African Parliament. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

Mr S H MBUYANE: Hon House Chairperson, to the Deputy Minister, what is the value, as in benefits and advantages, of us as the Republic of South Africa for hosting the Pan African Parliament? Thank you very much. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Can we hear the Deputy Minister?

*IsiNdebele:*

Itjhada leli liyakhula. Angazi livela kuphi itjhada leli.

*English:*

Whips, please help us. Can you restart the Deputy Minister’s time, please?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Hon House Chair, I think we attach greater significance to hosting PAP because of our Pan African outlook which is one of our key foreign policy priorities.

Secondly, PAP is a platform for public representatives on behalf of the 55 African Union, AU, member states to be involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent. It is actually a mirror image of the South African Parliament at a broader scale hosting all 55 AU states.

I think that it is also a political incentive to ensure the leadership role that South Africa continues to occupy in the African continent in the world. It finds expression to hosting of PAP and the hosting of the African Peer Review Mechanism, APRM, and to draw a number of chairpersonships that we host and we are a part of in the African continent and in the world. Thank you very much, House Chair.

Mr M CHETTY: House Chairperson, to the Deputy Minister, clearly you and your department have not learned a lesson from squandering R118 million on the New York pilot project. The highly unsuccessful New York pilot project pales in comparison

to the proposed Pan African Parliament project that cost us currently R3,2 million a month in rental. The current long delayed infamous Pan African Parliament building has already cost us R90 million and that is excluding the R40 million a year rental for Gallagher Estate.

Minister, with the current situation that South Africa finds itself in, we cannot afford this project anymore. Over half a billion has already been spent on rentals, and there is nothing more than just a barren piece of land to show thus far. Deputy Minister, we call upon your department to abandon this project and allow other member countries who eagerly want to host PAP in their countries to rescue us from this further embarrassment. Please, Deputy Minister, do not waffle on about how important and what prestige this brings to our country.

For if it was that important we would already have had the building up and running in the first five years. This has now become a project to save face of ANC ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Time is up. Hon member Chetty, your time has expired. You have only one minute, can I allow you to ask the question?

Mr M CHETTY: Thank you, Madam Chair. [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Order, hon members! Proceed, hon Chetty.

Mr M CHETTY: We believe that the project is now to save face of some high ranking ANC leaders before their counterparts on the African continent for their failure to deliver on their mandate ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Chetty ... [Interjections.]

Mr M CHETTY: Deputy Minister, we call upon you to ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Chetty ... [Interjections.]

Mr M CHETTY: ... and put South Africa first.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Hon Chetty, you see now? Hon Chetty, I gave you extra time so that you can ask the

question and still you don’t. Your time had already expired. So, please don’t do that. Deputy Minister, was there a question? If there was you may respond.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): Hon House Chairperson ... [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Order, hon members!

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-

OPERATION (Mr A Botes): In plain English he asked whether we are going to abandon our prime Pan African outlook as South Africa. The answer is no, the future of South Africa is intertwined to the future of the entire African state.

The second issue that he asked is how we are going to continue to assume a leadership role in implementing decisions of the African Union Assembly. For example, one of the key protocols was the protocol to the Treaty to establish the Pan African Economic Community relating to the Pan African Parliament. So, in that respect, once again we are going to confirm our

eagerness to prosecute our pan African solidarity using PAP as a key instrument in relation to that.

The third question that he asked, hon House Chairperson, is how we are going to be loyal to the optics of the predecessors of the Organisation of the African Unity, OAU, as it relates to the Abuja Treaty and the legacy plan of action. The answer to that is yes. Thank you very much, hon House Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Ms M G Boroto): Ministers have two minutes to respond to the follow up questions. So, don’t say hayi [No]. If he is prepared to answer all three or four questions it is up to the Minister or the Deputy Minister. So please ...

*IsiNdebele:*

... phumani lapho.

*English:*

Hon Deputy Minister, we thank you. [Applause.]

The House adjourned at 17:59.