**MEDIA STATEMENT**

**HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DISAPPOINTED WITH LACK OF PROGRESS IN MIGRATING TO AUTOMATED BIOMETRIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM**

**Parliament, Wednesday, 10 May 2023** – The Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs is disturbed by the persistent delays in completing the migration from the Home Affairs National Identification System (HANIS) to the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS). The delays are concerning in the context that despite huge financial investments no tangible progress has been achieved, with the service provider requesting numerous extensions.

While the committee welcomes the imposition of penalties against the company for the delays, the committee called for solutions to challenges encountered. These challenges include not migrating data as per plan, end-to-end testing, migrated HANIS data not synchronised, as well as the misalignment of registered fingerprints between ABIS and HANIS.

The committee urged the department to ensure that an agreement is reached on the penalties and that the service provider must be liable to pay those penalties. The committee resolved to allow the department to meet with the service provider and to test their systems. The department will report back with a detailed and timed action plan post-assessment on 23 May 2023.

The committee continues to support the use of an upgraded system with innovative technological functionalities, such as facial recognition and palm biometric modalities, which will create further confidence in the population register.

Regarding the Biometrics Movement Control System (BMCS), the committee has similarly raised concern about teething challenges, such as inadequate bandwidth and the impact of load shedding at some ports of entry, which impact on the system’s functionality. The committee urged the department to find workable solutions to these challenges to ensure a fully functional movement control system, as this has a direct impact on securing our borders.

Meanwhile, the committee received a detailed briefing on consequential amendments to the Political Party Funding Act emanating from the signing into law of the Electoral Amendment Bill. The committee resolved that Members of Parliament will be granted the space to engage with their political parties to enable in-depth discussion on the matter.

The committee believes equitable access to funding for political parties and independent candidates will only strengthen our democracy. Once the members of the committee have finalised engagements with their political parties, the matter will be table again for further discussion. The committee welcomed the update on the consequential amendments as well as guiding principles established to give a framework for political funding.

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HOME AFFAIRS, MR MOSA CHABANE.

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

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