**UNREVISED HANSARD**

**MINI PLENARY - NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TUESDAY, 23 MAY 2023**

**VOTE NO 23 AND 26 – DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**

***PROCEEDINGS OF HYBRID OF THE NATIONAL* ASSEMBLY**

Members of the mini-plenary session met at Good Hope Chamber at 10:00.

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

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

Debate on Vote No 23 – Defence, Including Vote No 26 – Military Veterans:

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chairperson,

hon members, the acting secretary for Defence, Chief of SA National Defence Force, SANDF, acting chief for Department of Military Veterans, DMV, ladies and gentlemen, the future is clearly not very predictable these days. We witness political,

economic and social stress on the increase. We see the re- emergence of global ideological contestation. At the continental level we accepted that the legacy and indeed the resurgence of modernised colonisation is on the return with persistent disputed sovereign and territorial issues abounding.

We see the rise of political instability and the rise of coup d’etat especially around the western side of the continent.

The global drive to access Africa’s resources continues to result in the poor progress on the continent resource harnessing beneficiation and consumption. Africa continues to experience severe socioeconomic disparities, instability, violent ethnic and religious extremism. Closer to home, our slow economic growth impacts negatively on our infrastructure development maintenance and expansion. Joblessness has increased social dependence on the state. Criminal behavior and corruption they deter and they retard our progress which leads to people being jobless, people depending more on the state and people tending to violent reaction towards neighbours towards the state and towards their own family members.

This does not help us in any way to realise our true ideal of a true democratic South Africa which is united and diverse.

Chairperson, the Department of Defence, DoD, baseline for the 2022-2023 budget was increased by R2,5 billion to

R51,6 billion through the adjusted estimates. I need to point out that as we concluded at the end of March 2023, the unaudited actual expenditure was R54,6 billion, which means that we were over the 100% expenditure. I point this out because when we look at the cost of employment, we will realize that we are definitely terribly underfunded there.

That is the cause of why we would overextend there.

In 2022, the SANDF continued to participate in the various regional security initiatives. We are still at the Unites Nations, UN, mission in the DRC, we are still the lead element in Mozambique in SADC Mission in Mozambique, SAMIM. We continue to safeguard our borders, we continue to be on standby for humanitarian aid and disaster relief within South Africa and with our neighbouring countries. The two new inshore patrol boats have been put to good use along our coasts. Members would remember that you were expecting ... [Inaudible.] ... and then we will start trying to lobby for

funds to get there and the ones that go deeper hopefully bigger and more of a deterrent nation.

Chairperson, we continue to be at the borderline as I said. For this year we have received R51,1 billion which is now translating to R500 million less than the previous budget. We have set aside R30,6 billion for compensation of employees because this still leaves us underfunded by R2,6 billion if you count the actual boots on the ground. We have set aside R8,6 billion, the Armaments Corporation of South Africa, Armscor, will get R1,5 billion of this. Accommodation leases, municipal levies and services will take R2,8 billion. The airlift capability repair of the Navy Defence Systems will take R1,5 billion. The mission in the DRC will take another billion Mozambique will take R850 million.

This has resulted in the production of the future strategic division direction. This includes evaluating the 2015 defense review and producing a revised level of defense ambition and a revised strategic trajectory to be submitted to the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security, JCPS, cluster before March 2024. The future RSA Defense and Security Policy Concept document is taking into account the security and environment

constraints facing the defense function and that is also being developed. The future military capstones will be providing the strategy on how to pursue the National Defense Security. Now, the Chief SANDF calls that the journey to greatness. It prioritises nation building, safeguarding and building, internal stability, securing the regional development, creating regional security, enhancing cyber resilience, providing and enhancing hard power capability for SANDF through a small but core major combat capability that is relevant and ready to meet future conflict challenges.

I intend to bring this to the committees in the next four months for a discussion and for further inputs. I trust, Chairperson, that that journey to greatness will begin to optimise on our border function, will enable us to establish a rapid reaction capability, will enable us to establish a maintenance repair and overall capability to maintain the legacy systems and we will also be able to revisit the soldier and its secure, happy and proud to be in the employ and service of South Africans. We need to also understand that unless we do this, we will not be able to arrest the decaying in their defense.

We need a military practice that must inform how we structure SANDF to the future, how we co-ordinate combat formations and control, how we enable commanders to take responsibility, how we deal with issues between the commanders and the civilian part of the department. We need to do this because the secretariat is under fire and the Chief of Defence Force is under fire. When you go to our end state 3, Chairperson, you will realise that we have findings as by the Auditor-General for the financial year 2021-2022 and we were audited and all four balances were found to be irregular. Now excluding those matters of underfunding in 2022-2023, we have incurred unaudited regularities of R1 million in fruitless and wasteful expenditure in R475 million in irregular expenditure. We have received nine material irregularities from the Auditor-General as at the end of 2022-2023.

Now, due to the underfunding of the cost of employment we are likely to be over expending by R3 billion in the current financial year. So, we are in constant engagement with the secretary to make sure that whatever it is that we think - and we have traced the problems of irregularities straight back to procurement. The Acting Secretary for Defense has been instructed to look and to find solutions. We have done so the

whole procurement system has been reviewed, the identification of lack of skills amongst those who are responsible for procurement is identified and agreement has been signed with the school of governance to train soldiers who are responsible for procurement so that we go right down to where the misstatements and misreporting happens and begin to cure it from there.

I do know that I had threatened at some point to dock and to reduce the financial delegations for as long as slow as we can so that we can begin to trace what happens where. We also not that saying that if we train and train regularly those who are responsible in logistics and procurement will cure this but we are saying that those who will not adhere to what they are told to do, then they must be dealt with without any mercy because a defense force which cannot look after its own resources and not in the long term be responsible for taking care of the bigger business that is looking after the resources of South Africa.

I think that when we do that we also - and we have discussed with the President that we - might be bringing in the special investigating unit, SIU, we might be bringing not only in the

Department of Defence, DoD, specific we will also take it into the Department of Military Veterans, DMV, because we want to make sure that what was done in the past is corrected.

Nevertheless, before you correct something you must understand why it is happening and how frequent it is happening and who? So, we are trying to deal with it. We want to say that one of those things is dealing with suspensions because there we are a bit untidy because sometimes for the same post we are paying twice. So, we are looking into that.

We also looking at filling in firstly, the vacancies in civilian site. We are also saying that within, we are almost at the point where we must constitute the interview panel to replace both the chief finance officer, CFO, and the Secretary for Defense. We think that we should be doing. We want to say that this Chief of the Defence Force has been instructed to find ways to rejuvenate SANDF. It is not just about recruiting young people, it is also about looking at systems, upgrading, rejuvenating the capabilities, finding ways of preserving and maintaining. We think that our legacy systems will be what we need to do.

To that end, we are running around doing what is not really in our ... [Inaudible.] ... but we are beginning to work with other industries in other countries to try and resuscitate Denel. It is in our interest to see a vibrant defense industry and it is in our interest to lure back the skills that this country has lost because of lack of cohesiveness and because it was not just like ... [Inaudible.] ... Enough input also into Armscor engineer to ensure. That has not excused Armscor from not doing its job. They are slowly getting ... they have gotten the whip so many times that I am not too scared to scream but we are beginning to get on track in making sure that we have identified those capabilities where we are the weakest, we are looking for partnerships and we are very happy to say that there is a lot of interest. A lot of interest especially where we are at the weakest.

We are hoping that soon we will be able to announce publicly the Chief of the SANDF the partnership with Umbro of Brazil to manufacture and to repair in South Africa. It would be a boost to our defense industry, it will also enable us to force our own government to put more money in it. What do we do? We want to say that we want to quickly make sure that chief SANDF is able to come out with that rapid deployment capability, that

we are able to deal with air transport, that we are able to have air capabilities in place, that our maritime platforms are fixed and work heavy, that the health systems are in place and that we find the money which we are promised to ensure that even if we do not feel the 15 companies on the borders, we have enough technology to substitute.

We think the porousness of our borders leads us into being frankly undermined as a sovereign state, being undermined economically and contributes to the unstableness of our economy because if you see your rail tracks jumping fence and if you see new electricity pylons jumping fence, you do know that you have issues. However, before you point a neighbour at the place you fix your own yard, you clean up. We are also looking at exploiting but also going back to forcing government to invest in internet protocol, IP, that research and development, R&D, investment will stand us in good state.

It will promote young people to have more interest in the defense. It would resuscitate the relationship between Denel, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR, and ourselves but it will also begin to reimage the Defence Force in this country into the levels that we want to. Chairperson,

I want to say with that, not finishing my speech that I want to commit Vote 26 and 23 to you and to this House for your approval. Thank you.

Mr V C XABA: Hon House Chairperson, Minister and Deputy Minister, hon members, the Acting Secretary of Defence, Dr Gamede, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, chief of staff, I also see Acting Head of Department, HOD, for the Department of Military Veterans, good morning.

Parliament’s two defence committees, is the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans and the Joint Standing Committee on Defence have shown their resolve during the Sixth Parliament to engage robustly on defence matters.

For example, over the last year, the two defence committees jointly conducted 54 oversight meetings and undertook three oversight visits. The latter included visits to the Bloemfontein military area, Eastern Cape military units and an inspection of the Denel facilities responsible for aircraft maintenance. These visits are of specific value, as they provide members with a first-hand experience of the factors that impact on members of the SA National Defence Force.

The Joint Standing Committee on Defence recently tabled its Mid-term Review Report to Parliament to update Parliament on the state of readiness of the SA National Defence Force. The report highlights the massive strides made by the SANDF in terms of its deployment capabilities, despite fiscal constraints. It demonstrated the resolve of soldiers to deliver on their mandate even under difficult circumstances.

However, the report also warns that the committee is observing a critical state of decline of the SANDF which is in urgent need of funding and re-capacitation. In order to address this regression, Parliament’s Defence Committees has made noteworthy interventions, especially through its Budgetary Review and Recommendation Reports.

Through the committee’s intervention, National Treasury has agreed to additional funding of R1,4 billion over the MTEF to upgrade SA Navy Frigates and Submarines, as well as R1 billion in 2023-24 to strengthen the country’s airlift transport capability.

Further, the committee noted the need for the SANDF to remain a technologically advanced force and advocated for the

increased use of technology on South Africa’s borders as a force multiplier. National Treasury has agreed to additional funding of R500 million in 2024-25 and R200 million in 2025-26 to procure equipment and technology to aid the safeguarding of borders. Parliament will continue to monitor the responsible spending of these allocations over the MTEF.

A defence force has an important foreign policy tool in any nation, and South Africa is no different, specifically in the context of rising regional insecurity. The SANDF contributes to regional security through its participation in two external missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC and Mozambique.

The recent loss of Sergeant Vusi Mabena may his soul rest in peace and the injury to one of his colleagues when their Oryx helicopter came under fire in the DRC highlights the sacrifice of South Africa’s soldiers in the pursuit of regional stability. We owe a debt of gratitude to them.

In 2023-24, South Africa will maintain a total contingent of 957 members deployed in the DRC as part of the United Nations Stabilisation Mission as well as 1 495 members in Mozambique

as part of the Southern African Development Community, SADC peacekeeping mission. The defence committees have highlighted the need for deployed soldiers to be fully equipped and for investments to be made in the availability of helicopter and transport aircraft availability in these missions.

The SANDF also offers an important internal stability tool in support of the South African Police Service to render frontline security services. On the internal front, the ongoing deployment of the SANDF along the South African borders to address cross-border crime has shown significant successes.

In the second quarter of 20223, for example, the SANDF confiscated 15 weapons, 484 vehicles and 2 075kg of contraband along South Africa’s borders and prevented 3 730 undocumented persons and 66 stolen vehicles from illegally crossing into South Africa. As noted above, the SANDF has also assisted the police on various occasions through Operation Prosper, most recently as part of a deployment of 880 soldiers to guard critical infrastructure at Electricity Supply Commission, Eskom.

Similarly, the Military Health Services was called in to assist the Department of Health to mitigate the effect of industrial action in March 2023. These are important contributors to domestic stability and security.

Central to any effective military is its human resources component, and Parliament’s defence committees have identified this as an area in need of further intervention.

Firstly, previous Cabinet decisions and subsequent Treasury Regulations to pitch the Department of Defence, DoD CoE compensation of the employee’ ceiling at the current level has become un-implementable, contributes to irregular expenditure and impacts heavily on the country’s defense capabilities.

Over the last five financial years, the compensation of the employees’ expenditure averaged R2,5 billion, bringing the total of irregular expenditure over the same period to R12,5 billion. To fund this excessive expenditure, the department had to shift the funds from acquisition and maintenance budget. This has had dire effects on the serviceability of Prime Mission Equipment such as Strategic Aircrafts, vessels, and the deployment of vehicle fleets to

meet the military operational requirements of the air force, the navy, and the army respectively. Constraining the availability of key platforms is the lack of funds for midlife upgrades, routine maintenance, and acquisition of spare parts.

Therefore, the committee’s budget report, we are moving today expresses its concern to Cabinet in this regard and calls on the DOD and National Treasury to urgently find a feasible way forward in dealing with the matter of CoE expenditure. I should add that two committees of this Parliament, namely the Joint Standing Committee on Defence as well as the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans have taken an unprecedented step, that is to write to the President as a Commander in Chief to bring to his attention the serious situation that the SANDF is facing.

The Committee also notes the need for human resource interventions to ensure a younger, more agile and fit-for- purpose SANDF. To this extent, the budget report states that the DOD should prioritize the development and implementation of its human resources rejuvenation strategy to ensure an overall younger force that allows for soldiers to be exited at different levels.

This Strategy will be essential to provide young, patriotic South Africans the opportunity to enter into the military. The previous initiative in 2021 to shift 1293 reserve force members to the Correctional Services is a positive example of how ageing soldiers can be assisted with alternative career choices. The Joint Standing Committee on Defence will, in June 2023, conduct an international study tour to gather further information on, among others, international best practice on defence human resources management, rejuvenation and Compensation of Employees expenditure optimisation.

The committee welcomes the repositioning of the Simon’s Town Naval Dockyard. This critical assets will prove essential in reviving the Country’s ability to manufacture its own vessels. The entity will require a competent partner to deliver on the maintenance and midlife upgrade of our vessels at the required speed.

In the year under review the SANDF hosted a multi-national maritime exercise with Russia and China. This saw 350 SANDF members participating alongside their Russian and Chinese counterparts. This follows a successful multinational peace

support operation and humanitarian relief exercise with the United States, US Army.

It has conducted exercises with France and Germany. To curry favour with their masters, the opposition parties selectively picked on the training with Russia and said that this is confirmation of South Africa’s support of Russia in the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Nothing could be further from the

truth. Our relations are neither stronger or weaker. With that we support the budget. Thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr S J F MARAIS: House Chairperson, this is our last budget for the Sixth Parliament, and I want to express my appreciation to our defence committees, chairpersons and staff for excellent work and support over this period.

Our Defence Force should be an instrument bolstering our foreign relations and protecting our international trade and investment interests. This budget unfortunately decreases to an unstainable 0,73% of GDP or R51,1 billion from the adjusted R51,6 billion. Given the defence index of 12 to 15% in real terms, thi budget does not allow the Defence Force to comply with its constitutional mandate.

While the 2015 Defence Review and National Treasury require a spending framework of 40% on cost of employees, 20% on training and operations, and 20% on equipment procurement and maintenance, again, 70% will be spent on cost of employees and only 30% for the rest. With the abuse of the Defence Force to make up for failing departments, more specifically SAPS, most of the 30% is absorbed by unfunded ad hoc deployments. Little remains for maintenance and replacement of our prime mission equipment.

The complete serviceability of some of our most crucial prime mission equipment, which mirrors the dire state of the Defence Force, include two of 11 Rooivalk attack helicopters, six of

39 Oryx transport helicopters, zero of four Lynx maritime helicopters, one of six C130 cargo aircraft, two of 26 Gripens, three of 11 Hawks, two of 35 Pilatus, zero of four Frigates, zero of three submarines, and zero aircraft for maritime patrol, reconnaissance, search and rescue.

Our land, wet, air and maritime prime mission equipment have not been maintained, and we have not invested in high tech digital, cyber and satellite technological capabilities.

Operation Phakisa cannot be supported, and we will unlikely be

able to conduct search and rescue operations in the southern seas. With the responsibility to patrol and protect our borders of 4471 kilometres land, 7770 kilometres air, 3942 kilometres coastline, and our Exclusive Economic Zone of

1,5 million square kilometres, it will be impossible to defend our country against attacks.

We cannot provide logistical support to our soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique with one C130, with the consequence we have to charter aircraft at hundreds of millions per year, enough to buy our own. We have witnessed at six SAI that our airborne infantry units cannot prepare our soldiers for deployments due to the unavailability of Oryx and C130’s. Our landward forces find themselves in the same predicament with Op Corona, under resourced and our borders remaining porous.

We urgently need the political and management will to bring about changes, otherwise a complete collapse is imminent.

I do believe, based on current and future threats, but with the required restructuring of the Defence Force and reprioritization of its strategic focus and spending, that we

are R20 billion underfunded. Secondly, we must aim towards a 1% of GDP budget over the medium term.

Let’s deal with the elephant in the room, the irrational Russian love affair. Over the last 30 years government exploited the US and EU as our most important trade and investment partners, with significant trade and investment surpluses, compared to deficits with China and especially Russia.

Four incidents that took place, that gives the impression of this Russian favoritism are, munition imports and exports happens via official Portnet ports of entry, authorization was granted to the Lady-R, a Russian commercial vessel to bypass commercial ports and abuse our naval base instead, unrestricted access were seemingly allowed for offloading and reloading cargo during the midnight hours of 6 to 8 December with little or no control and security on the naval precinct. This was a major national security breach. Who authorized this, and why? Were the 2019 and 2020 import permits for the Russian ammunition still valid? Something was loaded onto the Lady-R. Was it ammunition? If not, release the vessel’s cargo manifest to confirm this.

Minister, you and the President should know the facts and what transpired. If everything was above board, why not be transparent and go on record? The longer you stay silent the more the damage to our international image, investments, and trade interests most notably African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA and our economic prosperity. Second one is Exercise Mosi, with little value to us, provided a propaganda opportunity to the Russians, as exploited by their news agency TASS. A Russian commercial cargo aircraft was allowed to use Air Force Base Waterkloof for supposedly diplomatic purposes, a privilege not available to other nations. Where is the cargo manifest?

At a time when National Treasury criticizes Defence for spending R1,5 billion on travel, Chief of the Army was allowed to gallivant in Moscow. Again, TASS exploited it for propaganda purposes. Why the favoritism and preferential treatment, especially in the light of Russia’s aggressions on Ukraine’s soil? Why risk our economic future, trade, investments, and jobs? Is it favors and sovereign sacrifices in return for donations to the ANC, reportedly from the Russian government and oligarchs? If so, is it treasonous

against South Africa? There must be consequences. I thank you. [Time expired.]

Mr W T I MAFANYA: Chairperson, 10 years ago young and old educated and poor, and not so poor, congregated at Uncle Tom’s Hall in Soweto to answer the question, what is to be done?

These women and men resolved to establish the EFF as a political organisation to contest for political power, and whose ultimate aim is the distraction of exploitation or oppression, and the ushering in of socialism.

Minister, your predecessors came, stood here with grand wish list and then we find ourselves where we are today. We note that today you put us in your wish list that is grad and very convincing. But this year, as we celebrate the existence of 10 years of the tool at the hands of African people, we call on all African people to vote and to contribute to the growth of the EFF to usher in economic freedom in our lifetime.

The defence industry as a whole and the SA National Defence Force in particular, are in perilous state in this country. The systematic and deliberate collapse of the Denel and Armscor by the ANC government has had ripple effects on the

industry as a whole, and on the economy. The past three years, government has been unable to bring stability to Denel, and seemingly, they are oblivious to the impact that the collapse of Denel would have on the status of the SA Army itself.

The Defence Intelligence capacity cannot fully support SANDF advance warning of military threats and instability in the country. This was demonstrated even as Mr Ramaphosa deployed SANDF internally to deal with crime in the cape flats, and in the wake of the uprises in KwaZulu-Natal. Soldiers were wandering about aimlessly and even saw them used to collect looted food stuff in KwaZulu-Natal. They did this because they had no idea what to do. They had no Defence Intelligence.

Various studies have shown that our forces are inadequately equipped with old technology and weaponry. They cannot engage in robust military exercises, and they will not sustain long term equipment neutralising foreign nations. The sovereignty of our ... [Inaudible.] ... is compromised and maintenance of constraints of prime mission equipment is virtually stagnant.

The SA Airforce aircrafts are unserviceable and there are no spares and engineers resort to cannibalise other aircrafts to

recur some as to remain relevant. We do not have Infantry Fighting Vehicles. The ones that are in existence needs serious upgrades. The ability of the country to fulfil its international obligations is at stake, and the Navy and the Air Force have cut down on military exercises due to unavailability of equipment and resources. The President and the Minister are obsessed ... [Inaudible.] [Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, there is disturbance on the virtual platform. On previous occasions I have indicated that those microphones must simply be muted. Can we implement that, please. Please proceed, hon member.

Mr W T I MAFANYA: The President and the Minister are obsessed in deploying SANDF for internal support to other government departments, as well as external conversional military support with no availability of resources. A R51,124 billion for this financial year is inadequate, and will never be able to meet the needs for our armed forces to maintain sufficient defence readiness.

Despite this, Mr Ramaphosa has recently deployed SANDF to defend Eskom power stations from this imagined threat from our

people. He knows that his dismal failure as President, demonstrated by this electricity crisis, rising unemployment, the suffocation of those who work by unsustainable interest rates hikes, has uncontrollable crime levels, and the involvement of key institutions of the state in the commission of crime, all have the potential to tear the country down.

He resolves to military intimidation of citizens like all dictators do. Mr Ramaphosa is not different from Mnangagwa, his Zimbabwean counterpart. They are both lost ... [Inaudible.] ... no interest of the development of these countries. Perhaps Mr Lekota was right. That now because he is President, he has come to finish off the hopes of black liberations that his masters wanted to dash when they saved him from imprisonment in the 70s. We reject this budget. Thank you, Chair.

Mr S S ZONDO: Hon Chairperson, the importance of the capable defence of our country is beyond question. Defence is our last vestige and important for our national stability in times of crisis. It further plays a peacekeeping role on the continent and safeguards our porous borders from the ever-increasing

threats of cross-border insurgency by criminal trafficking syndicates.

Hence, it is ... [Inaudible.] ... upon our government to prioritise national defence and ensure that all the necessary funding and resources are available for our defence whenever and wherever they are needed. This unfortunately, is not the case and with the meagre budget this department receives, it is no wonder that it remains at its lowest ebb of functionality.

This has the knock-on effect of creating poor morale and ill discipline within the ranks of our soldiers, which translates into unnecessary incidents and in some instances deaths.

Maintaining a skilled and motivated workforce is crucial. There must be greater professional development programmes, better salary packages and pensions for our military veterans.

We stand by and salute our brave military veterans who risked their lives in the struggle against apartheid and have served in various peacekeeping missions across Africa. Their sacrifices and commitment to peace and security is the

foundation upon which peace and security is built in this country.

Although this budget has the potential to bring significant positive change to the lives of our veterans by promising access to education and training for thousands of veterans, integrating them into the national workforce and securing business opportunities for them, a lot still needs to be done.

As we celebrate this potential progress, we must not turn a blind eye to past failures of this government and how it neglected military veterans for so long. For 12 years, this government failed to fulfil its promise and obligation to provide pensions to military veterans, leaving them struggling financially. This neglect is not just an oversight but a deliberate failure to honour military veterans. It mocks their sacrifice and raises serious questions about government’s commitment to the welfare of our veterans. The failure to provide pensions for military veterans has undermined their financial security, making them face hardships and struggles that they didn’t have to face if proper support had been provided to them.

Needless to say, the mental toll of such neglect cannot be overstated. The families of our veterans have suffered too. Children and spouses have borne the brunt of financial strain, and the negative effects on their welfare and education are profound.

Although the initiatives in the current budget come too late, particularly on socioeconomic empowerment, the IFP believes that there is always time to right a wrong. For this reason, we call upon the government to ensure the swift and full implementation of this budget. We will accept no more delays and no more excuses. The military veterans have waited long enough.

Given the rampant corruption in this government, we demand robust mechanisms of accountability and transparency in the administration of veterans’ benefits to prevent any taking of chances for self-enrichment.

In as much as the current budget proposes the creation of jobs in partnership with the private sector, we demand that partnerships must not only bring jobs but also careers for our military veterans so that they can contribute to society and

use their skills and experience for their economic advancement.

In conclusion, the IFP affirms our unwavering commitment to our defence and military veterans. We will continue to push for their welfare, honour their sacrifices and ensure that their contribution to our nation is never forgotten. The IFP supports this Budget Vote. I thank you, Chair.

Dr P J GROENEWALD: Hon Minister, maybe we must just look a bit back into history. In the nineties, we kicked off with a Green Paper on Defence, the Defence Review and all the needs of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF. We had the arms procurement process and then, I think you will agree that since 2005 — and I actually went back and looked at my speeches from then — in each and every debate we complained about the lack of finance for the SANDF. It's a valid argument to say that we need more money to ensure a functional and well-operational SANDF. I have supported it all the years.

However, hon Minister, we must also admit that when we look at the arms procurement scandal, the taxpayers of South Africa are asking questions because if you want more money from the

taxpayer, the taxpayer asks, well, do I get worth for my tax money? Unfortunately, we must be honest with each other and say, no you don't.

Let’s take the arms procurement situation. How many of those armaments are really operational at this moment? Our submarines, our frigates, our fighter planes, all of it, with great respect, and it is sad to stand as a proud soldier to say, many went down the drain. They're not operational. Then you can't blame the taxpayers of South Africa when they say, we don't agree with giving more money.

I am worried that you just said that we will see that commanders take responsibility. Why must we see to it? It is natural that a commander must take full responsibility.

*Afrikaans*:

Maar agb Minister, soos ons altyd in Afrikaans sê, daar is ook klein jakkalsies wat die wingerde verwoes. Ek het vir u ’n vraag gevra. Daar is 'n Brig-Gen wat sedert 2017 op spesiale verlof is omdat daar kriminele klagtes teen haar is. 2017!

In April maand hierdie jaar hardloop daar 'n kragopwekker by haar huis 24-7 in Centurion. Ek het vir u 'n vraag gevra en u het geantwoord. Dit is gestaak. Dit het die weermag

R58 000 van 1 April tot 20 April vir daardie brandstof en daardie kragopwekker gekos. Dit is die klein jakkalsies wat die publiek sien wat die wingerde verwoes.

*English*:

I want to come to the veterans of South Africa. You're a soldier or you were a soldier. I'm a soldier or I was a soldier. We must have respect for our veterans. You know, because you were part of the process when we wrote the Military Veterans Act. There was a long discussion about who should be seen and defined as a military veteran. It was about the statuary and the non-statuary forces, and everything, and we agreed. We said that we honour all soldiers. Therefore, statuary forces are also part of the veterans. You know there were regulations and we've asked some questions, and it has been changed. Yes, it provides for a military veteran in terms of the definition. However, if you go onto the website of the Department of Military Veterans, then it says that there are certain limitations on the pensions for statuary forces. Now,

hon Minister, that's unacceptable. I’ve asked why and what these limitations are.

*Afrikaans*:

In Suid-Afrika moet ons ons veterane respekteer en almal moet op 'n gelyke basis kwalifiseer. Ek weet hulle moet 'n middele toets slaag maar kom ons gee minstens krediet aan alle militêre veterane. Ek dank u.

Mr S N SWART: House Chair, it was a great joy to attend the recent SA Air Force, SAAF, Museum Flying Day at Air Force Mobile Deployment Wing at Swartkop. I was immensely impressed with both the veteran and younger pilots who took to the sky in a number of vintage and new aircraft. It was particularly pleasing to, once again, see the Gripen and Hawk fighters in action. The ACDP would like to commend all members of the armed forces who planned and participated in this successful event.

We also sadly remember a SAAF flight engineer, Sgt Vusi Mabena, who was killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, DRC, in February this year. Our thoughts and prayers

are with his family and the SAAF at this time. We wish the commander, Maj Matlapeng, a speedy recovery.

It is against this background that the ACDP once again laments the budgetary cuts experienced by the SANDF. The Defence budget is shrinking in real terms, going from R54 billion in 2021 down to R54 billion again in 2023 and R51 billion for this financial year. Clearly it is unsustainable. The ACDP has, like many other parties from the majority party through to opposition parties, lamented this decline. It is sad that this has not been properly addressed, given the important role that the SANDF plays in protecting our constitutional democracy.

However, at the same time one also has to express concerns about the overspending and this largely due to the cap on compensation with the exit mechanisms. The ACDP is pleased that there is an engagement between the Defence Department, the SANDF and National Treasury in this regard, because clearly as the committee has indicated, whilst on the one hand there must be prudent financial spending, this must not result in a shrinking Defence Force, and that we all agree is what is occurring.

National Treasury has made various recommendations on optimising internal spending such as staging Armed Forces Day once every two years, reconsidering the number of parades and re-evaluating the continued maintenance of 44 attaché offices. Minister, this is an important issue. The attaché offices cost billions and I think this is something that should be looked into.

The ACDP also shares concerns about the docking of the sanctioned Lady R Russian cargo ship at Naval Base Simon's Town. The question is what was loaded on and off the ship during the midnight hours? If it was innocent, release the cargo manifest. Ongoing silence on this issue threatens very important trade relations with the West.

To conclude, despite severe budgetary constraints, the SANDF has always responded when needed, both in peacekeeping functions and domestically. For that the ACDP honours all the men and women in uniform. I thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Hon

House Chair, I wish I could live long enough to see the Sun

City of the EFF where there will be a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage.

But on a serious note, hon Chair, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, hon Members of Parliament and members of the oversight committees, the government is not relenting in its endeavour to improve the plight of military veterans in South Africa. Last week, we were handing over 13 decent houses to military veterans in Midvaal, Savanna City Settlement, in the Sedibeng District, thanks to the Gauteng Department of Human settlements for their consistency in honouring the service level agreement between the two departments.

As a province, Gauteng is leading the delivery of houses to military veterans in all the nine provinces. At 883 units delivered since the commencement of this programme, the next closest province at 358 is the Eastern Cape. We wish to take this opportunity to commend the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements for this exemplary performance.

With the interventions explored at the Minmec of the Minister of Human Settlements two weeks ago, I am confident that together with MECs of Human Settlements in the provinces, we

will overcome the many glitches surrounding housing delivery to military veterans soon.

Hon members, when government adopted the policy to house military veterans in 2011, it was never anticipated that a

decade later there would still be military veterans who are without houses, for the simple reason that this is not a big

community. Secondly, these are citizens of mature age and are not getting younger. As a result, many of them have perished

waiting in the queues.

According to the records 4,253 applicants are approved for

housing. Of this number, 2 083 which constitutes 49%, or almost half of them, have received their houses. It is my

considered view that with the available capacity of government in the provinces to deliver houses, this remaining applicants

can be housed within a relatively short period of time, if we

can eliminate a number of subjective weaknesses around housing. We intend convening a housing Indaba with military veterans’ associations to address these challenges, including the critical and urgent revision of the regulations governing housing. This will be with a view to arrive at a determination of a realistic but purposeful deadline within which this

programme, the provision of housing to military veterans can and should be brought to an end. In our current Annual Performance Plans the target of houses to be delivered to military veterans is 480 units.

Another significant achievement in the endeavour by government to restore the dignity of military veterans, is the

commencement of the rollout of the Military Veterans’ Pension following the tabling of the regulations for 30 days in

Parliament as communicated by the hon Minister of Defence and

Military Veterans, Minister Modise on 22 December 2022.

The Government Pensions Administration Agency deserves accolades for putting citizens first in their work. They made

it possible, against all odds, for this pension to be rolled out by 24 April 2023. They put in place all the requisite

framework agreements with the Department of Military Veterans,

they established the standard operating procedures, established the Business Requirement Specification, designed the admission configuration, opened the PMG Account, created email addresses for applications and enquiries, and trained regional administrators, for military veterans to access this relief.

Hon members, in settlements where we have succeeded to house military veterans in significant numbers, their outcry is about the absence of incomes for livelihoods. The desire to place military veterans in jobs has not been successfully co- ordinated, this has been further compounded by the constraint

state of our national economy and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is for this reason that the breakthrough we have

finally made to introduce the military veterans’ pension is a huge achievement, thanks to the political support the

Presidential Task Team, PTT, brought to bear on this matter.

Military veterans who are without pensions for the services

rendered to our country will therefore be a thing of the past. They will now be modestly cushioned by this pension. In this

regard, it has since come to light through the intervention by hon Bantu Holomisa, that pensions of civil servants who were

employed by the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei,

TBVC states, soldiers included, are mired in administrative complexities which have left some of them without any pensions. The matter stands referred by the President to the Minister of Finance for prompt attention. The Ministry will monitor progress in this regard, and ensure that no military veteran is left behind, without a pension. We intend to load

1. 000 recipients of this pension by the end of this financial year according to our plans. An amount of R330 million has been set aside for this purpose in this financial year.

Hon members, while still on pensions, we must clear the

misunderstanding regarding the Military Pensions Act of 1976, Gen Groenewald, and the Military Veterans Pension as

introduced by the Department of Military Veterans. In short, the two instruments are not the same and are not reconcilable.

The 1976 Military Pension was not a pension in its object, it was a compensation policy for injuries incurred by soldiers

during their years of service in the SA Defence Force, SADF, before 1994, which was paid in modest instalments monthly to

the end of the recipient’s life. This included those who were serving their call-ups in accordance with the national service

system under the apartheid system. Pensions in SADF only

accrued to members of the Permanent Force, the professional soldiers who were members of the Regular Force, at the point of exiting the system.

The above notwithstanding, there is a need nevertheless to harmonise the contemporary compensation for injuries as

provided for in the Military Veterans Act, Act 18 of 2011, and the “1976 Military Pension Act” which is also a compensation for injuries too.

Hon members of the House, the Department of Military Veterans

derives its mandate from the Military Veterans Act of 2011, which requires it to provide national policy and standards on

socioeconomic support to military veterans and their dependents, including benefits and entitlements to help

realise a dignified, unified empowered and self-sufficient

community of military veterans.

We are once again tabling the budget of the Department of Military Veterans this year under the stewardship of an acting

incumbent, the newly appointed Acting-Director-General of the Department of Military Veterans, Vice-Admiral Retired Mosioa

Hlongwane, who is fortunately not a stranger to this oversight

committee of Parliament as committee members have interacted with him in his previous responsibility as Chief of the SA Navy. This development is politically most regrettable, but a necessary intervention by the Ministry in observing the injunctions of our administrative law to protect public

interests and to advance the strategic priorities of the 6th Administration of our democratic government.

Last year when we presented our plans we pointed out that we were optimistic about prospects of meaningful advances in our

work. This was because there were, and still are, several critical subjective weaknesses which we could have overcome,

and will overcome. We must stick to the Rule Book in order to achieve a turnaround of the Department of Military Veterans

and to regain lost time in fixing the backend of the

department, in order to ratchet up the output of the front-end of the department. We need to put in place reliable and

capacitated internal audit controls, we need proper legal and labour services, we need an adequately staffed human resource

branch, we need more planners, we need disciplined conventional supply chain management, we need communicators,

to mention some of the debilitating gaps we urgently need to

attend to, in order to achieve bigger successes. This high vacancy rate was further exacerbated by suspensions which were not expeditiously addressed.

Lastly, the project to buttress the efficiency of the department’s business operations through automation, which we

reported about when we tabled our plans last year, is still work in progress with modest advances made.

In other areas of the department, work has been proceeding apace. The department has now paid out more than R6 million

for compensation for injuries and trauma. The department will ensure that the processing of the remaining applicants is

fast-tracked by increasing the availability of doctors who are dedicated to provide this service with a view to finalise this

programme by the end of this financial year.

The extension of health services to military veterans’

dependents has been endorsed by the Presidential Task Team. The implementation of this decision has not received

sufficient administrative attention. The planning session of the Department of Military Veterans agreed to convene a

special workshop with the SA Military Health Service, SAMHS,

to explore modalities of delivering comprehensive health services to military veterans.

Education support has scored significant improvements however there are still structural deficiencies such as the absence of collaboration protocols with the Department of Basic Education

in the provinces. The Department of Military Veterans education support programme has produced over 50 graduates in the last financial year alone, including 2 medical doctors and

1. law graduates. An amount of R126 million was spent in the previous year, 2022-23 in support of the education of children

of military veterans.

Hon members, one more urgent task, as I move towards conclusion, that task with the Acting-Director-General will

help us attend to expeditiously, is the convening of the long

overdue conference of the umbrella body of our military veteran’s associations, the SA National Military Veterans

Association, SANMVA. SANMVA is one of the important enablers we need to realise the many things we must do for military

veterans and with military veterans. We must commit to accomplishing this task by end of the second quarter this

year.

The Department of Military Veteran’s 2023-24 financial year budget has increased by R224,7 million from the previous year in nominal terms, and in real terms by 27,3% after adjustments for inflation. The biggest increase in nominal terms was in Programme 2 with an additional R171,8 million allocated.

Programme 3 also sees a major proportional increase of R69,6 million, which is 47,15% nominal increase.

The compensation of employees remains stable and increases only marginally from R133,4 million in 2022-23 to

R134,4 million in 2023-24.

The biggest increase in the budget allocation is in terms of households, which increases from R214,1 million in 2022-23 to

R442,3 million in 2023-24.

In summary, the Department of Military Veterans budget for

this financial year is R894,7 million from R670 million in the previous financial year. It is expected to increase at an

average annual rate of 16,5% to R1,1 billion in 2025-26. This increase is mainly due to the allocation of additional funding

amounting to R839 billion for rolling out the pension benefit

to military veterans and their dependents as well as

R11,3 million over the same period to cover cost-of-living adjustments.

Hon House Chair, I wish to take this opportunity to thank military veterans in all our provinces, many of whom have been

patient with us, many of whom have displayed the hallmark of their profession, discipline even under trying times. Their understanding is appreciated.

As we move closer to the 30th Anniversary of our Freedom Day a

year from now, let us work together, as a disciplined and purposeful army with the determination to help government

restore our dignity and a place of honour in our communities.

My word of appreciation goes to my Minister, Min Modise, the

chairpersons of both our oversight committees and their hard- working members, the Acting Secretary for Defence and the

Chief of the Defence Force, the Acting Director-General of the Department of Military Veterans, and the undeterred senior

managers of the two departments and the Ministry. I thank you.

Mr B H HOLOMISA: House Chairperson, hon Minister and Deputy Minister as well as hon members, the UDM supports the budget. There have been things happening in this country that are embarrassing for us and our intelligence gathering forces seemed to be none the wiser. The July mayhem of 2021, took place and we seemed to be none the wiser as to the perpetrators of that violence were. On a daily basis, there is

vandalism of our railway and electricity infrastructure as well as cash-in-transit heist and car hijackings.

People from outside our borders have access to military grade weapons as was recently seen in Qgeberha where taxis were pursuit with guns and in Potchefstroom, a man was arrested in possession of 14 hand grenades. There is a low intensity war inside our borders that is creating anxiety among South Africans. Intelligence gathering to protect our territorial integrity is becoming more and more important. The Defence Force must form part of developing a proactive plan for submission to the powers that be, to curb these elements in our society.

Moreover, the Defence Force has a greater role to play during disaster relief. With the unavoidable effects of climate change upon us, there should be a greater preparedness and readiness to act when disaster strikes. Military bases and personnel across the country should be trained and be equipped to assist their civil counterparts as they are always tardy in their response to a crisis.

Finally, it is unlikely that we should see conventional war that would require military action, but we should use our resources to the fullest and most important in terms of the mandate of the SANDF ensure the territorial integrity of this country during peaceful time too.

*IsiZulu*:

Ngiyabonga.

*IsiXhosa:*

Enkosi.

Mr A M SHAIK EMAM: Thank you, hon House Chairperson, allow me to thank the department for the presentation. The National Freedom Party will certainly support the budget tabled here today. Now, my concern is that the Defence Force is expected to protect our other government institutions like Eskom. Then how is it possible for our Defence Force to protect our borders if they are going to be deployed to protect all our power stations and other government buildings. Now, in order to achieve that, I think it is obvious that this department must get more budget. With limited budget, certainly it cannot achieve this.

But having said that the National Freedom Party will support this. We are cognisant of the fact that the department is facing a lot of challenges, particularly with military equipment, vehicles, vehicles lying in garages for long periods of time, not being able to get spares, the whole arms and ammunition which has to be shared. That is why we believe more budget if you want the goods to be delivered.

But let us also draw the attention of this House to Minister, we have South Africans training in Israel in the military, which poses a serious risk to South Africa. It is something we need to address, not forgetting that the Israeli Army brutally murdered Shireen Abu Akleh. A woman, a journalist, a Palestinian American journalist, who had a vest which clearly showed she’s from the press despite that she was murdered.

I want to also raise a concern. I see some colleagues of mine are talking about particularly Russia and I like this topic. Actually, I must tell you, but what I do not understand is: What is good enough for the goose should be good enough for the gander. Here is the United States of America that is supplying Ukraine with war arsenal, military equipment, financial support and cause chaos and mayhem all over the

country even supplying, particularly military equipment. That is why the turnover increased seven times last year, just seven times more and yet nobody says anything about it. So, South Africa must be dictated to and said no we must not supply.

But having said that Minister, one of the issues that have come up, Denel is the pride and joy of South Africa. I want to urge this department to do everything to make sure that Denel is successful. There is a concern that was raised with me about beards for the Muslim community. I would like you to look into that, if you could actually address that.

Very importantly, I think I wanted to draw an attention to one very important family. Yes, families have been shot down all over the world, my brother. All over, children are dying. I have got some statistics 3 000 children were murdered in Israel, in Palestine because of the arms and ammunitions provided by the United State government. So, let us do what is best for this country. Let not others dictate to us and tell us what we must do. Let us go ahead and do what it is. Some people can do anything to please the West. Let us please

ourselves. The National Freedom Party will support this. Thank you very much.

Mr M L SHELEMBE: Chairperson, the dismal failure of the Department of Military Veterans to submit its Annual Performance Plan to Parliament as required and we think the required timeframe is evidence that the ANC should not be trusted by voters and should be removed from power in 2024 general elections. The reduction in allocation to manage specifically financial management from R18 million to

R14 million is of great concern given the findings by the Auditor-General that during the previous year audit material misstatements were identified due to inaccurate and incomplete supporting and schedules and reporting. In 2021-22 financial year, the DMV made use of consultants to assist with the preparation of the annual financial statement for a period of two years and despite the use of these consultants there were still material misstatements that needed to be adjusted. Hence we say this reduction is of great concern.

The DA welcomes the additional funding allocated for the rolling out of pension benefits to the Military Veterans but it is very worrying that the DMV will not be able to spend

this budget in full in this financial year, given that pension benefits regulations are yet to be finalised. The ANC government has since 2011 been failing to finalise the regulations and this is why the Military Veterans and their dependents are starving. The constant delay with the organisation of regulation cannot be tolerated. Chairperson, if the DA was in government Military Veterans and their dependents would have their benefits delivered on time and their dignity after serving their country with dedication would be preserved.

Chairperson, the Military Veterans Act clearly defines the responsibility of the government in administering the affairs of the Military Veterans and benefits available to them, but military veterans are still not able to access health facilities due to the failure by the DMV under the ANC government to finalise the transport strategy. It is more than

11 years since the act was enacted, but Military Veterans are still suffering the consequences of the failing ANC government.

Chairperson, by the end of the 2022-23 financial year the DMV had only spent about 10% of its allocation funding available

for housing, resulting in only 68 houses being built against a target of only 355. This is unacceptable, Military Veterans are homeless because the DMV under the ANC government failed to spend the budget.

Minister, the further reduction in the allocation for provincial offices from 56,1 million to 45,6 million is another area of concern. Our oversight visits to East London in the Easter Cape, we were disappointed that we were not able to get information due to under staffing. It became clear why Military Veterans after travelling long distances to these offices are failing to get assistance and information they need. During our oversight visit to charity 491 housing project in Port Elizabeth, Military Veterans complained that due to unemployment it is difficult to get to offices in East London because the DMV is yet to finalise the transport strategy. Minister, this is treating military veterans with contempt. Military veterans and their dependents are suffering the consequences of a failure by your department.

*IsiZulu*:

Hulumeni kaKhongolose ninesono, aninamahloni okulambisa abantu abanivikela kangaka belwela izwe. Anginizondi nginitshela

iqiniso anginisukeli. Balambile abafelokazi ngenxa yenu. Ngiyabonga.

Ms P A PHETLHE: Hon cochairs of the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans, hon Minister of Defence, hon Deputy Minister, hon members, allow me to start by echoing the remarks by George S Patton Jr, an American general and an achieved soldier who said: “The soldier is the army, no army is better than soldiers. The soldier is also a citizen. In fact, the highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one’s country.” As the ANC we support this Budget Vote. As the ANC I would like to salute the men and women who are in uniform and who give their lives and dedicate themselves to serving our nation, within the SA National Defence Force.

Let me extend this gratitude to our fallen soldiers and ex- combatants who defend the South African flag and its people until the very end. Our defence force has been doing well in executing their mandate. More work needs to be done to address the borderless challenges that are posed and can compromise our state security and sovereignty. You must take into consideration the changing landscape of information warfare

and an increase I cybercrimes. That is why the important role played by the domestic defence industry must be recognised for their contribution to technology advancement.

With the current budget constraints, we need to ensure that we encourage all those who work in the Department of Defence and Military Veterans to guard against a waste of the minimal resources that are allocated to the department. We must reaffirm our zero-tolerance approach to crime and corruption. The department has notably acted against some of those accused of wrong doing. We appeal to those responsible for urgently speed up the investigations of irregular fruitless and wasteful expenditure and enhance consequent management in this regard.

In the same breath, the department is encouraged to urgently fill up the vacancies that exists, and it must also urgently fill up the permanent appointment s in the position of the Secretary of Defence and the Department of Defence’s chief financial officer. As South Africa chairs Brics currently, we must showcase our ability to be competitive on the global scale. Most of the times, people will want to showcase our arts and culture, trade and industry, our governance and

economy abilities. I am of the firm view that part of this things we must pride ourselves on is our Defence Force - to have a world-class competing Defence Force. This means that we must look deeply into funding of the Department of Defence and Military Veterans. We cannot continuously have declining budget allocations while we expect improved outcomes from the same Defence Force that we need to give us good output.

In our work as the portfolio committee, we observed that there is a stagnant and lack of investment in the SA National Defence Force. Mainly, they learned how to defend capability and notably, the South Africans have infantry capability. We agreed that this factor has been worsened by the nonfinalisation of project of [Inaudible.]. We recommend engagement among National Treasury, the Department of the Defence and Military Veterans and Armscor to consider further funding for phase 2 of the project, depending on feasibility. We must also consider the upgrading of the current retail fleet to extend its service ability as an immediate alternative.

The National Treasury, the Department of the Defence and Military Veterans, and Armscor should jointly come up with a

plan to address the infantry capability constraints. We would like to caution against misalignment between the requirements said in the estimates of national expenditure and more realistic requirements in the annual performance plan, APP. The department must ensure that it achieves the targets it sets for itself in the annual performance plans, APP, which are achievable plans with the current physical context performance and should be non-negotiable. There’s a need to finalise the review of the 2015 Defence Review in this financial year because the review provides a long-term policy and Defence trajectory to be pursued by the country over the next four Medium-Term Strategic Framework periods. It will give us a clear perspective of where we are headed to. This budget allocation must act as an indication of the commitment to make progress on the review of the 2015 Defence Review.

During the state of the nation address, the President of the country, his excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa said: “Let us get to work, let us rebuild our country and let us leave no one behind.” We observed that in most of the time, there are those who are pointing one finger and forgetting that most of the fingers are pointing someone. [Interjections.] Having done that, perhaps while they are still looking for the mathematics

as to how many fingers point somewhere, they should also refrain from the practice of making a lot of noise because a lot of noise may disturb the society to understand where we are going as a nation, but they rather join hands and take the quote by the President that we must work together for this country without a lot of noise that we are doing and showing up most of the time.

In conclusion, we support this Budget Vote because we believe that the Department of the Defence and Military Veterans has an important and strategic role to play for getting to work to rebuild the country through its effective and efficient strategy. I thank you, Chair.

Mr S M JAFTA: Hon Chairperson, the National Defence Portfolio is the anchor ship of our national security and sovereignity. It is this anchor pillars from which this budget must be grounded. Alleviating the plight of military veterans must also be reflected in the budget.

We must put it on record before this House that we support any efforts by the Ministry to achieve peace in the region.

However, we must be clear that peace begins at home. The work

of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF, in our cranial region communities must be felt by our people.

The funding of military intelligence must be beefed up. This must be geared towards counterterrorism acts.

Hon members, the co-ordination of our national responses through this National Security Council has not yielded the expected results. The July unrests, for instance, bears testimony to the unco-ordinated work betwixt and between the SA Defence Force, the SA Police Service and the National Intelligence.

While we do not support the reduction of funding of the SA Defence Force, we must record the Ministry has not proven on a balance of probabilities. Why it needs further funding? This is because military veterans have always lived in perpetual poverty, whether under reduced or under increased budget allocation.

The SANDF staff still live in derelict apartments, whether under a reduced or an increased budget allocation. Any tinkering with SANDF will therefore be of no consequence.

There is no doubt that peace and national security is central to development. It is in this regard that we cannot underestimate the constitutional role of the SANDF in our democracy.

However, this does not mean that we must pay lip service to the department’s gradual decline as demonstrated by the demise of Denel. The SANDF border capacity is in shambles. Many foreign nationals enter our ports of entry with little difficulty. This has led to social dislocation of our own country. The old and derelict military equipment is of great concern to us. There is therefore a need to modernise the Defence and maritime fleets. On this narrow ground, we could be unable to support this Vote on the basis that an investment in military equipment is an investment in peace, development and security. We will therefore support this budget with minor qualification. I thank you.

Mr M NYHONTSO: Hon Chairperson, I will also speak on behalf of Cope.

*IsiXhosa*:

Comrade Xaba, ufane wandijonga nge-binoculars.

*English*:

Hon Chairperson, it would be disingenuous of me if I reject this budget. For our constituency is benefitting from this budget. However, Comrade Minister the PAC wishes to express its disappointment in the negative attitude of the Easter Cape provincial legislature and its premier for regarding the late Khamteni a leader of the Poqo insurrection in the then Queens Town in 1962 as not worthy of an official funeral. That is not a problem, but the problem was when the premier called the daughter and told her that there was nothing special about his father. It clearly says that patriotic heroes of the national liberation struggle who served in the course of freedom and land rights are for the Eastern Cape premier not worth remembering and commemorating. This betrayal is unacceptable.

Mr Khamteni was an 83-year-old military veteran recognised and register on the database of the Department of Defence and Military Veterans. He was an expolitical prisoner on Robben Island maximum prison and spend 20 years for his activities as a cadre of Pan African Congress of Azania. He did not have a criminal record, yet the Eastern Cape premier refuses to acknowledge the fact that Khamteni inspired younger generations to take up arms and smash apartheid and settler

regime which eventual led to the phase of history we have today in South Africa.

The Eastern Cape premier is tapping with his dirty boots on the graves of our patriotic heroes. Our history is written with blood and no lies is written in it will erase it.

The Department of Defence and Military Veterans is doing the same thing when they lock out many freedom fighters, but accept the SA Defence Force black cleaners, gardeners and askaries the status of military veterans with forged SADF force numbers. The liberation war veterans are completely rejected by the red tapes of the Department of Defence and Military Veterans.

Hon Minister we are all concerned about these Defence budget cuts and hon Minister please honour veterans! Respect soldiers. The PAC supports this budget.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Hon members, I have received a request from the hon Hendricks. So, I will use my discretion to give him three minutes. Over to you, hon Hendricks.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Hon Chairperson, there is no excuse for the towns of the military veterans continue to live in abject poverty. I was a school child at the age of 11 and I led the first focal march across the road in District Six. I am very passionate about the military veterans. When I got the award as a pioneer of the Internet and I open an Internet café for them in Canalwalk.

Hon Chairperson, we heard the Deputy Minister saying tension is building up within the military community. Government must restore the dignity of our military veterans and roll-out pension pay outs. In December 2002, the veterans were promised by the former Deputy President and the Minister had a budget set aside to pay out before Christmas, but six months later, no pensions were paid to any of them. The question is: Where is that money?

There is another Christmas coming up in June in the Muslim community and maybe it will be paid before Laparang. She should not have to made promises to them, but she had a dutiful address.

Military veterans must be given their fair share. They should be given land so that they can reduce and create their generational wealth.

I presented a petition on behalf of 500 sailors in Swellendam. There enough land and it has been identified. However, this process is dragging for three years. Military veterans cannot afford land in Simons Town and if given land for free then the costs on houses will be reduced.

At the Presidential Imbizo where I am staying on Friday, 19 May, Deputy Minister Skwatsha spoke about the chicken farm managed by military veterans in the Cape Winelands in this regard. None of them had the phobias idea of where this farm is and the work and support and the substantial training be provided for those engaged in farming and co-operatives, maybe President Ramaphosa must declare chickens as the thousand products that can only be marketed and sold by small businesses and hopefully, military veterans.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Hon Hendricks, just hold on a bit. There is one member here who is standing up. Hon member, what is the problem?

Mr W F FABER: Hon Chairperson, I am sorry. My point of order is: On Rule 53 it is very clear with regard to the speakers list. If you have a look it says if you have mini-plenary sessions, and the member does not make of a speakers list, except in the event of a debate on a the Budget Vote when a speakers list must be used, it does not say may be used. So, I think Chairperson, it is out of order for the Speaker to bring in another party which is not on the speakers list, it says it must be used.

So, there is no that you can use your interpretation on it, Chairperson. So, please I do not see Al Jama-ah on this speakers list, Chairperson, it says the speakers list must be used. So, I thought I must bring it up for you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Hon member, thank you very much. I am not using my interpretation. I said I am using my discretion. There is a difference between the two.

So, I will return on the exact ruling regarding that particular interpretation of that clause to you. Hon Hendricks, just complete what you were saying.

Mr M G E HENDRICKS: Yes, he disturbed me and that is how they disturb democracy in South Africa. If the DA-led government and the other opposition governments from apartheid takes over our government, they will double the pensions and benefits of the state era apartheid operatives, but our military veterans must stand in a queue and wait for their pensions. The interjection is disgusting! Thank you very much, hon Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Thank you very much, hon Hendricks. Our next speaker is the hon Bond. You have three minutes. Hon Bond just before you proceed, I received a note that this is your maiden speech. Over to you.

Mr M S BOND: Hon Chairperson, I just like to note the hon Chairperson of the Defence Committee and the members of the Defence Committee, the Minister of Defence and her Deputy and the hon members of this House, all senior members of the staff of the Department of Defence and Military Veterans, in addition to what is raised prior by the hon Marais and the hon Shelembe, that I totally concur with.

Out of my been elected to this esteem establishment, it was a rude awakening for me to find out and learn and understand that the Department of Defence is in an absolute mess. This department is riddled with corruption and bad administration. The disposition of the entities of Armscor and Denel truly leave little to be desired. Logistical support of military is hampered by nonsupply of necessities to ensure that the quality for a well-equipped and up to date military is done. Equipment which is out of date and still in use continues to be unmaintained. A properly secure supplier will ensure an effective operation of the military and protection of this country.

The noncompliance of the age limitations for posts of our military members is affecting the ability to be effective. Military needs to upgrade and to stay relevant to properly protect and serve our soldiers who will in return protect this country.

This country’s military is not combat ready to secure this country. What concerns me about the *Lady R* who arrived like a lady the other night had disappeared as quickly like the way she arrived. However, what has not been raised is incidence of

the docking of ships involved in the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, Brics, navy exercises which includes China and Russia that were loaded with, I do not know what and I do not think anybody does either.

Having served in the military for many years, we have adopted the code of conduct who all in uniform members of South Africa, I still carry this with me. That includes the Rules of War, notwithstanding these principles of engagement, the one thing that stands out is paragraphs two and three of the Rules of War and I quote:

I will fight only enemy combatants and attack only military objectives. I will employ methods of attack to achieve military objectives with a least amount of harm to civilian and property.

As far as the Department of Defence and Military Veterans is concerned this department is in the worst state of the Department of Defence. No filling critical posts, little or no service delivery, riddled with corruption and no value for money. The money that is budgeted for the Military Veterans department, for the number of veterans registered cannot be

justified. The military veterans should be respected for their service by the department and the country they serve. Thank you, Chairperson. [Time expired.]

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Hon member, your time is up. Yes and you know what I did because this is your maiden speech, I gave you one free extra minute.

Mr M S BOND: I thank you, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Yes. I was using my discretion. Thank you very much. The hon Mmutle, you have 11 minutes, but earlier on when the hon Phethle was speaking she saved two minutes and 20 seconds. It is up to you to decide what you do about those saved minutes. Over to you, hon Mmutle

Mr T N MMUTLE: Revolutionary greetings to the real Commander- in-Chief of the Armed Forces President Cyril Ramaphosa in absentia, the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, the Deputy Minister, the chair of the portfolio committee, the Chief of the SA National Defence Force, acting secretary of defence, as well as the acting director-general of the Department of Military Veterans and fellow South Africans.

The ANC welcomes and supports the Budget Vote 23 and 26. However, we wish to state that the condition under which our SA National Defence Force is operating has reached the level where we all must be concerned. I am happy that some of the opposition parties have raised that concern. It means we are in consensus with the budgetary constraints that continue to make it difficult for the SA National Defence Force to perform optimally.

It is on that note that we think a fundamental question that was once asked by the former Minister, who is currently the Speaker of Parliament is still relevant when she asked, and I quote:

“What kind of a defence force should South Africa have and what can it afford?”

As we pass this budget today, that question remains unanswered. Hon Marais, I am very disappointed that as the DA you seem to be obsessed with “Lady R” and it’s a sign of desperation. You know that some of the defence force operations are classified. Why should you expect them to divulge the classified information to the public? You want

them to release the cargo manifest that you know very well it is classified.

The United States of America has sent you to advance on their behalf and we dismissed you in the portfolio committee. They could not wait any longer, and they were not happy with your slownessness and they had to come out. I want to put how Khalid Abdul Mohamed characterised people like hon Shelembe when he said, and I quote:

“'When white folks can't defeat you they'll always find some Negro—some boot-licking, butt-licking, buck-dancing, half- baked, half-fried, punkified, pasteurized, homogenized nigga that they can trot out in front of you.”

We are unapologetic about the deployment of SA National Defence Force to ensure that South Africans’ rights are protected. That must be noted by the EFF. Therefore, your planned shutdown was not successful and must disabuse yourselves from imagining that you can take power through the back door. We are disappointed that you rejected this budget and in the portfolio committee, you continue to tell us that your approach to matters to defence are nonpartisan.

We expected nothing from you in any event because you always display what Frantz Fanon says about suffering from cognitive dissonance. That is what clearly describes what the EFF stands for.

Hon Chair, section 200(2) of the Constitution notes that the primary objective of the defence force is to defend and protect the republic. However, the SA National Defence Force also has an internal role as is evident in the Constitution which allows for the deployment of the SA National Defence Force in support of the SA Police Service and section 18 of the Defence Act 42 of 2002 that allows for the deployment of the National Defence Force in support of any state department to ensure essential services and to preserve life, health, and property.

The SA National Defence Force can therefore be considered as an important insurance policy for internal stability in our country.

Example of these deployments ranging from 2018 to 2019 is a deployment of engineer to address the Vaal River pollution; the 2019 deployment with the SA Police Service to combat crime

in the Western Cape; several life scale deployments in 2020 and 2021 as part of the effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic; large scale of deployments in 2021 into Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in respond to the civil unrest; 2022 deployment to KwaZulu-Natal following the flooding in that province; and March 2023 deployments to assist the Department of health at various hospitals to mitigate the impact of industrial action.

As we are seated here, we anticipate another deployment to assist in the curbing of the cholera outbreak in Hamanskraal where the DA preside and gives our people dirty water that resulted in that outbreak.

The current deployment of the SA National Defence Force to Eskom power stations to secure critical infrastructure. The above deployments were in addition to the SA National Defence Force standing deployment of 15 subunits for the purpose of border safeguarding of South Africa’s land borders.

However, it must be noted that the continued high level of the SA National Defence Force internal deployment is not without risk. The SA National Defence Force may not be fully suited, trained funded and equipped for this internal deployment.

Increased deployments of the SA National Defence Force under this condition plays significant strain on the force to maintain a high level of defence readiness. It is also impacting negatively on training schedules and the Department of Defence budget.

In essence, a shrinking defence force with a shrinking budget is consistently required to conduct additional internal deployments to support other departments which is unsustainable.

We must ensure that appropriate staffing, funding, training, and equipping of the SA National Defence Force is made available for them to fulfil these additional functions. In simple terms, it is expected from government to pay its insurance at all material times to keep effect to constitutional imperatives as it relates to the SA National Defence Force mandate.

Hon Chair, the SA National Defence Force is a multifaceted military force that houses several specific skills. One of this is SA Army Engineering Formation. The engineering formation specializing in amongst others installation of

bailey bridges and other bridge systems given the need to improve the lives of South Africans specifically in terms of access to rural areas.

The SA National Defence Force has been committed to construct bridges in selected rural areas under the Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme. Pedestrian and vehicle bridges have previously been constructed to assist communities in the Eastern Cape and about five bridges were built and 14 in KwaZulu-Natal.

In his 2023 State of the Nation Address President Cyril Ramaphosa committed to expand the Welisizwe Rural Bridges Programme to deliver 95 rural bridges in this financial year. The project also shows high level of inter departmental cooperation between the Department of Defence and the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

Hon Chair, the 2015 SA Defence Review notes that persistent disconnection between defence mandate, South Africa’s growing defence commitments and the resource allocation has eroded defence capabilities to a point where the defence force is

unable to fully fulfil its constitutional responsibility to defend and protect South Africa and its people.

At the time of its publication, the SA Defence Review noted that in order to implement milestone one of the review, focusing on arresting the decline of the force, a consistent allocation of at least 1,1% of the country’s gross domestic product, GDP, defence will have been made.

To move to milestone two, an allocation of at least 1,6% of the GDP will be required. However, since 2015, the Department of Defence budget continued to decline from 0,95% of the GDP in 2018/19 to only 0,73% of the GDP in the current financial year. The figures above are in shrunk contrast to the other military forces around the world and the continent.

For example, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Nato, encourages its members state to spend 2% of their GDP on defence. Although not all Nato members achieve this target, it is indicative of the need for the elevated defence spending.

Closer to home, very few African states spend less than 1% of their GDP on defence.

For example, by 2020, Angola spent 1,6% of its GDP on defence, Algeria 6,7%, Botswana 3,5%, Kenya 1,1%, Egypt 2,9% Tanzania 1% and Rwanda which is the smallest 1,4%. We cannot continue in this trajectory.

As I conclude, in addition to the shrinking defence allocation, the actual size of the SA National Defence Force has also declined in terms of the number of personnel because of a Cabinet decision by 2015.

The SA National Defence Force has a total personnel contingent of 78 011 against an estimated population of 54,96 million. By 2023, this decreased to the SA National Defence Force personnel contingent of 69 072 against an estimated population 60,6 million. We are 8 939 less personnel compared to 2015.

Other militaries in the area maintain larger forces such as Angola with 117 000 soldiers with a population of 35 million, Algeria 317 000 soldiers with a population of 46 million, Egypt 836 000 soldiers with a population of 107 million, Nigeria 223 000 soldiers with a population of 220 million and Rwanda which is the smallest, 35 000 soldiers with a population of 13 million.

It must be kept in mind that the 1996 White Paper on Defence stated that the SA National Defence Force shall be a balanced, modern, affordable, and technologically advanced military force. It is therefore essential to find the right balance between these force sizes and the provision of the modern military technology in the context of a country’s threat perception.

However, both these aspects require appreciation of funding which is not achieved through the current level. I thank you hon Chair.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Hon Minister ...

*Setswana*:

... jaanong ke nako ya gago ya go ritella.

Ke rata go go itsise gore o ntse o na le metsotso e mebedi e e saletseng morago fa o ne o bula tlhopho ya tekanyetsokabo eno phakela.

TONA YA PHEMELO LE BAGANKA BA SESOLE: Go ne go setse disekonto di le someamatlhano, ngwana kgosi.

*English*:

Chair, I have been a Member of Parliament, MP, for so long that I will not brook, I will not even try to respond to hon Bond. Clearly, he still has to adjust and get to understand that we don’t play football with defence. We disagree a lot amongst us as parties, but we don’t get that dirty. So, I’ll leave it at that.

I want to, unreservedly, hon Nyhontso, apologise for the remarks that you say were made towards a Poqo [PAC’s military wing, also known as Azanian People’s Liberation Army] member, former Robben Islander, a veteran. I would take strong exception if anybody said that about any member of the ANC, any member of uMkhonto we Sizwe, MK, any member of Qibla (movement). So, our apologies. We will find a way of meeting up with the family and apologise.

Hon Marais, we agreed ... I agreed with almost everything you said today, except that ... and I want your permission, Chair, to use the word *fokol*. Because in my hometown you know *fokol* means nothing. I will reiterate what I said, we put *fokol* on that ship, nothing.

Mr A G WHITFIELD: Chairperson, on a point of order. Can you declare, with your discretion ... [Interjections.] ... whether you are tolerating that the use of the word *fokol*, whether in fact it is parliamentary? [Interjections.]

THE CHIEF WHIP OF THE MAJORITY PARTY): Nothing wrong with

*fokol*! There’s nothing wrong with the word *fokol*!

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): You know what is your problem, hon member? You stand up, you mention Chairperson and you just proceed. Right? As if the Chairperson doesn’t exist. Right? So, it doesn’t work like that in the House. You stand up, you ask to be recognized, then the Chair will give you recognition and thereafter give you an opportunity to speak.

Right? So, you proceeded without getting permission from the Chair. I’m going to request you to restart your point of order.

Mr A G WHITFIELD: Chairperson, on a point of order.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Over to you!

Mr A G WHITFIELD: Chairperson, could you rule whether the use of the word *fokol* is parliamentary in this House. Thank you.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): I’ll come back to you on that, hon member.

Proceed, hon Minister!

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chairperson, I

will not ... I think it was a deliberate ... [Inaudible.] ... to ... [Inaudible.] ... the hon member ... hon Groenewald will tell you, 1994 when you walk in here I was in the first Rules Committee of this House. I’ve been a presiding officer longer than anybody I know in this country and I think I do understand the Rules of the National Assembly, and if you want to do that, then the Chair will come back to you as ... [Inaudible.] ... I deliberately asked to be allowed to use the word *fokol* because it means nothing in South Africa and you know that. Because ... precisely because you are sitting there and you are always the *oraag*.

Hon Marais, I agree with almost everything you said. You and I disagree on one thing. The insistent that your relationship

with Israel, nobody can talk against, but relationship of the ANC with Russia, which far outdates us coming into this House, must be tempered with. The relationship which is between the Russian army and the South African army predates my coming into this ... predates the relationship and the ordering of whatever it was that was on that ship that was delivered, and the lady ... [Inaudible.]

Maybe we must be advised whether we must jettison every relationship that we have. And maybe you must also tell us, hon members, whether the 14 members of the defence, secretariat and military who are on their way, in the next few weeks, to the United States, US, must be stopped because then you are going to tell us we are also sucking up to the US.

You see, we handled relations on a country by country, on a defence to defence. And therefore, I think it would be very myopic of us to be, every time, told you cannot breathe until we tell you so. Because that will stifle any interaction.

You ridiculed Musi ... by the way Musi-0 was the name given by the South Africans; Musi-1, Musi-2. Musi was an exercise that we said actually enabled us and our navy, and just as all of

us here ... [Sound overlap.] ... reiterated that our navy is on its stomach, it’s not floating. Because it enabled us to enable members of the navy to have exercises on those ships.

I welcomed the President’s calling for an inquiry into the matter of Lady-R. I think I would still be able to say ... I will reiterate what I said, that defence force, if it has lied to me that something was put in; it will be a matter. All the documentation, from the time the order was made in 2018 up to the time of the offloading, al the documentation of SA Revenue Services, SARS, will be made available to that inquiry so that we can, please, be allowed to think and proceed with other business of defence.

I think that ... hon Groenewald, I’ve heard the complaint about the pensions, statutory v non-statutory. What we are grappling with is not recognizing statutory forces, what we are grappling with is actually for me to dig out the information around the types of contracts. For instance, people who were not actually volunteers, who were an e-stat, who would serve a two-year and other would run away. What was is called? Conscripted. Because when you look ... and for me the biggest headache that we must solve, because it is

important for the coloured course, is for us to get into those contracts and see how long they were in the defence force and give them what is right by them.

But I do not want to go back to the constituency with half- baked stories. So, I want to say that we’ll do the best we can for the military veterans. But we will not be ostentatious.

When you look at these amounts that you are giving, it is because maybe dilapidated and non-functional, as that military veterans’ department was, at least a serious study was done to compare with the relevant economies what goes to military veterans.

I want to say that we are very happy about the delivery of houses. I also want to say that I will convey the condolences from the different parties, again to the Mabena kingdom and family. We want to say to you, that defence, which sometimes blunders, which sometimes makes ... is taking and has every intention of taking care of the Mabena children and all the other soldiers who die in action, we will not neglect, we will look after our own, black, white and purple in between.

So, Chairperson, I just wanted to say thank you for all who wish us well and thank you for all who also criticise us because criticism is good to build. We will not expand what is not in the budget line, that is my first learning of whatever financing. If it is out of the budget line, they know I’m the first one to scream. We will go after skills as we are going into the interviews to get a properly trained Chief Financial Officer, CFO. We will make sure that not only do we say that people must go and be taught procurement processes, they will also be taught the basics of finances so that we come back and we do not go back to you and say the misstatements are not largely because of corruption, sometimes it is because of missing receipts.

The Auditor-General says to me, you go to Base A, they have borrowed Base C equipment. Base C instead of taking it back to A, borrows it to another. At that time, it is not ... it cannot be accounted for. It is not, therefore, that they have lost, or they have stolen everything that we accuse them of.

So, for that I want to say, may the soldier in South Africa get the respect, may we continue to rely on and respect those who are prepared to lay down their lives for us.

I’m sorry, the time is up. So, I cannot respond to all the other questions. And I’m hoping that you will continue to give the support, not necessarily to the Ministry, to the soldier, because that is where the pride of serving must go. Thank you, Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Hon members, earlier on I made an undertaking that I will come back to the House on two issues. The first one was a point of order relating the opportunity being given to hon Hendricks to speak. The second one was on the word *fokol*.

So, as far as hon Hendricks is concerned, the research I have done says that hon Hendricks was part of the original speakers list agreed to and approved by Parliament. Hon Hendricks earlier on had brought to the attention of Parliament that he’ll be held up elsewhere and he would not make it come to the debate or participate in the debate. As a consequence of that, his name was then removed from the final list. During the proceedings of the debates, hon Hendricks brought the attention of the Speaker’s Office that he’s now in a position to speak.

So, having weighed the two, the fact that he was in the original list, he had the intention to participate in the debate and the fact that we must allow hon members here to express themselves and represent their parties and their constituencies, that’s why I allowed hon Hendricks to speak. That’s the first one.

The second one ... [Interjections.]

Mr M NYHONTSO: Hon Chair, sorry to disturb you. But, Chair, some of us like Hendricks, PAC and others have one member in Parliament. For an example, now I was in this debate, and I feel ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... ukuba mandiye kwenye ingxoxo-mpikiswano ...

*English*:

... because I have time. Am I not going to be allowed to speak because I was not in the original list? Because I’m always available in all these debates and I can speak if I’m there. I don’t think this thing was necessary.

Why would I tell every House or every debate that I’m going to participate, when in fact there’s only one member of the PAC?

Now, we’re adjourning, I must quickly run to another committee and then if I find that it is the slot for the PAC ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... kwaye akukathethwa phaya ...

*English*:

... I must be allowed to speak.

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Are you done, hon member?

Mr M NYHONTSO: I am done. I am trying to say, if ...

*IsiXhosa*:

... ulungile lo mfo, iya kuba ayilunganga loo nto kuthi.

*English*:

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): Hon members, I was given the responsibility to preside last week on some of the

budgets and there’s a matter which ... I once ... I was not supposed to say but I’ll say it now that you are raising something else, hon member.

During that debate it was brought to my attention that the reason why hon Hendricks could not adhere to some of the agreements made is because he was unwell; he had undergone an operation. So, based on that I understood where he was coming from. Because I know his situation from last week and I’m presiding now, it doesn’t surprise me much that he may have been, earlier on, felt that he’s not maybe feeling well to speak, but along the way he felt that he must participate. So, I just thought you must understand the broader context why I allowed hon Hendricks to speak. Thank you very much.

On the second matter relating to *fuckall*. The genesis ... yes

... the genesis of the word *fokol* is Afrikaans; so, its genesis is born from the Afrikaans language. That’s the first thing about it. Right?

The second thing about it is that if you go into what is called the urban dictionary you will find there where they defined *fuckall*. And the urban dictionary says *fuckall* means

exactly what the hon Minister was saying, that it’s nothing, there is nothing. So, it’s not an offensive word, it’s not a swear word and that’s how I will suggest that we understand that particular word, hon members.

Just before we adjourn, be reminded ... [Interjections.] ... okay, hon member?

Mr A G WHITFIELD: Chairperson, that’s fine. It’s just a clarity. There are two variations which have now been used: one, by the Minister in Afrikaans, the other, by you in English. Are you saying that your ruling stands both in English and in Afrikaans?

AN HON MEMBER: Ya [Yes], they are both official languages ...

The CHAIRPERSON (Mr S O R Mahumapelo): I said that the word is *fokol*, other people pronounce it *fuckall*. There are people who say Mahumapelo, others say Mahumapheeloo. Right? So, I don’t think there’s a difference between what I was saying and what hon Minister was saying. But for your convenience, it stays, what I’ve given as an explanation in Afrikaans and in English.

Hon members, I want to bring to your attention the following: firstly, the debate on Police including Independent Police Investigative Directorate, IPID, and Civil Secretariat for the Police Service Budget Vote will take place at 2 o’clock, Good Hope Chamber.

Secondly, debate on Science and Innovation Budget Vote will take place at 2 o’clock, Committee Room M46.

This concludes the debate and the business of the mini-plenary is now adjourned. Thank you very much.

Debate concluded.

The mini plenary rose at: 12:21.