PRESS RELEASES

**Parliament, Friday, 11 December 2020 –**The Powers and Privileges Committee today adopted its report into allegations of conduct constituting contempt of Parliament by members of the Economic Freedom Fighters during the State of the Nation Address (Sona) on 13 February 2020.

In its report, the committee recommends for the consideration of the National Assembly that the referral of the Sona incident of 13 February 2020 does not have a reasonable prospect of success and therefore should not be proceeded with. The committee is of the view that the Presiding Officers were empowered to form an opinion that the members were deliberately contravening the Joint Rules, in contempt or disregarding the authority of the Presiding Officers, or their conduct was gross disorderly, and order the members to leave the Chamber in terms of Joint Rule 14G. However, they exercised patience and elected not to do so.

With regard to the ruling by the Presiding Officers ordering Ms Sonti to leave the Chamber, the committee is recommending that since the order for Ms Sonti to leave the Chamber was not pursued following the objection to the manner it was done, it could be reasonably inferred that she was probably absolved from having to comply with the instruction.

The committee also recommends that the thrower/s of the water bottles could not be identified from the video footage due to the angle of the camera, and therefore it is not possible to take that matter further.

Lastly, the committee recommends that in view of the inadequacy of the Joint Rules to deal with challenges as experienced during the Joint Sitting of 13 February 2020, a process to update the Joint Rules should be embarked upon as a matter of urgency.

Today, the committee also received closing arguments from the Initiator, Adv. Ncumisa Mayosi, on the incident of the 11 July 2019, during the budget vote speech of the Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr Pravin Gordhan.

The committee had to re-schedule the deliberations on the closing arguments due to the committee not forming a quorum. This is in accordance with Rule 162.2 of the National Assembly, which states that a majority of the members of a committee must be present for it to decide any question. The committee will schedule a meeting to deliberate on this matter at its earliest convenience next year.

**ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE POWERS AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE, MR PHILLY MAPULANE.**

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