

MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER

CLUSTER 1: PEACE AND SECURITY

QUESTION FOR ORAL / WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 360

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**REPLY RECOMMENDED BY:
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: MP**

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Mr W T I Mafanya (EFF) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:

What (a) is the current state of defence capabilities of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF), following reports that the SANDF is not in a position to defend the sovereignty of the Republic should there be a need and (b) steps is she taking to address the causes of the decline?

REPLY:

The continued decline in the Department's budget has had an adverse effect on the department's capabilities over the MTEF. It has forced the Department to look at prioritising all activities for better efficiency, by applying the principles of minimising, reprioritising, right-sizing and optimising to all aspects of the defence organisation in the quest to achieve our Constitutional mandate as prescribed in section 200 (2) of the Constitution, whereby the primary object of the defence force is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law.

To this end, I require the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the National Defence Force to:

- Review the budget allocation to all budget holders and reassign funding against priorities identified, including a zero-based budgeting system if so required.
- Continue the reduction of personnel to the Compensation for Employees ceiling allocated, as well as the sustained rejuvenation of the personnel compliment.
- Conduct cost-saving interventions to achieve value, especially value in the procurement system.

In my Defence budget vote of May 2022, I further elaborated my intent to address the strategic dilemma facing the Department of Defence, I indicated that the Department of Defence must provide a realistic and sustainable future-oriented defence value-proposition, cognisant of current fiscal realities, that delivers against its constitutional mandate, South Africa's national interests, and its risk appetite.

The Department of Defence must further implement short term stability measures, through savings and austerity interventions, that will allow the department to comply with the budget and allocation ceilings.

To the afore-mentioned ends, I have tasked the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the South African National Defence Force respectively, to work on the development of a national perspective on what level of defence South Africa needs, and what it can afford to maintain at a sustainable level. Further, five (5) primary military focus areas that must be pursued in the Future-Defence Concept, namely ensuring:

- a) Safeguarding of the nation through military missions, such as border safeguarding, maritime security (Ops Copper), support to the SAPS and other ordered commitments, including readiness for climate change; (Ops CORONA – 15 sub units Border Safe Guarding; Ops PROSPER – joint operations in support of SAPS; Ops CHARIOT – Flood and Disaster Management operation)
- b) Securing regional development through a peace and security capability, which speaks to both the deployment of robust forces and support to the African Union Peace and Security Architecture; (Ops MISTRAL in the DRC and Ops VIKELA in Mozambique)
- c) Ensuring hard power through the maintenance of core combat capabilities to protect the sovereignty of South Africa;
- d) Protecting the country's intangible sovereignty through support to ensuring defence digital protection;
- e) Nation-building through contributions to the country's national development imperatives, amongst others.

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MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS

DATE: 31/08/2022