

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1020. Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1) Whether, with reference to her comments reported in 2013 that 12 out of the SA Air Force’s 26 Gripen fighter jets were in long-term storage due to lack of funding to fly them, the specified aircraft are still in storage; if not, (a) why not and (b)(i) how and (ii) where are they being utilised; if so, (aa) what are the relevant details and (bb) why are these aircraft not being utilised to train our pilots at active SA Air Force pilot training facilities, such as Langebaan, instead of sending them for training to the Russian Federation and the Republic of Cuba;

(2) (a) what are the full reasons for training our SA Air Force pilots in (i) Russia and in (ii) Cuba instead of at active pilot training bases in the country and (b) what are the cost-benefits of training the specified pilots in (i) Russia and (ii) Cuba instead of in South Africa? NW1152E

**REPLY:**

1. 13 fighter aircraft are in the Rotational Preventative Maintenance program due to lack of funding.

1a. 13 Gripen fighter jets are in a Rotational Preventative Maintenance program from a fleet of 26 aircraft which are maintained throughout the aircraft life cycle as prescribed by the Designing Authority.

1b i. The Gripen fleet are under continuous maintenance while in Rotational Preventative Maintenance program.

1b ii. 13 Gripen fighter aircraft are operationally active at their home bases.

1bb. The Gripen aircraft are operationally utilised and used for force preparation of Gripen specific pilots and also for force employment.

2. Technically, we do not have any pilots training in Russia or Cuba. What we have in these countries are members identified to become student pilots.