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**MINISTRY**

**JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 1101**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 24 MARCH 2023**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 07 APRIL 2023**

**Prof C.T Msimang (IFP) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

What (a) are the further details on the matter of the more than 40 officials from the Department of Correctional Services in the Eastern Cape who have been hauled to disciplinary hearings for allegedly aiding 46 inmates to escape and (b) steps will his department take towards countering corruption and collusion in the prison system? **NW1215E**

**REPLY:**

1. Out of the 46 escapes that occurred from 01 April 2016 till 31 March 2023, only one (01) official was found to have aided in an escape and was dismissed. The Arbitration matter is pending at the General Public Sectorial Bargaining Council (GPSBC).
2. The following are measures currently in place to curb incidents of escapes which are outlined in the Department’s Security Operating Procedures (SOPs) which amongst others include:
* Some management areas have detection systems such as alarms and surveillance cameras. Advanced Operational System Technologies also assist in detecting potential breakouts and help prevent them;
* Escape Prevention Plans are in place at all Correctional Centres. These plans are reviewed annually and approved by Area Commissioners.
* These plans include regular monitoring and offender profiling to prevent escapes from Correctional Centres as well as from Courts and Hospitals.
* Heads of Correctional Centres ensure compliance, implementation and continuous monitoring of escape prevention plans;
* Security awareness is inculcated through processes such as morning parades, staff meetings and security committee meetings;
* Searching of cells, windows, inmates, officials, service providers and visitors is conducted daily and recorded in the relevant registers;
* Attending to complaints and requests of inmates and responses provided as per approved policies and procedures;
* Conducting of regular surprise searches and clean-up operations;
* Continuous training/orientation of officials on SOPs;
* Investigations are conducted regarding all security incidents including amongst others, escape incidents and swift consequence management is implemented;
* Review of incidents of escapes including analysing persons of interest and attempted escapees by Security Committees and information gathering at centre level to prevent future incidents;
* Profiling of inmates including gangs and placement in appropriate units including implementation of the Gang Combatting Strategy;
* Managing overcrowding by implementing the approved Overcrowding Reduction Strategy;
* Prevent idleness of inmates by subjecting them to sports, recreational programmes, social and physiological services;
* Protect whistle-blowers/ inmates that provide reliable information;
* Potential escape incidents are elevated to National Joint Operations and Intelligence Structures (NATJOINTS/ PROVJOINTS) and other law enforcement structures – to formulate more dynamic and integrated approaches.
* The DCS has adopted a holistic approach to enhance the Department's Security Operations and Posture in line with the six (6) pillars of security which includes amongst others, Physical Security.
* The designs for the replacement of outmoded and dysfunctional tower posts were approved during the 2021/22 financial year.
* The objective is to revive the use of tower posts by upgrading and replacing infrastructure that does not support operational requirements from an Occupation Health and Safety perspective. Various tower posts were upgraded at St Albans, Waterval, Rooigrond and Christiana. Other tower posts are currently under construction, which will meet the new design concept.

**END**