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**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

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**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 1102**

**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:**

Following reports that an autopsy was not conducted by his department after the reported unnatural death of Mr Thabo Bester, what steps will his department take to make sure that any (a) unnatural deaths in prisons are duly reported and (b) autopsies are speedily undertaken? **NW1216E**

**REPLY:**

1. In all instances of deaths where there is doubt that the causes of death cannot be determined/ are unknown or foul play is suspected, such deaths are immediately reported in terms of prescribed lines of communication. The South African Police Services (SAPS) are immediately informed for further investigation in terms of the Inquests Act, 1959 (Act No. 58 of 1959), and performing the relevant medico-legal post-mortem.
2. Immediately when an unnatural death has occurred, the SAPS are informed to facilitate performance of the required medico-legal post-mortem as a prerequisite for all unnatural deaths. The Department of Correctional Services depends entirely on the SAPS (Forensic Unit) for the conducting of autopsies on inmates that expire due to unnatural causes. Follow-up is made with the relevant SAPS Units to ensure that the relevant feedback is provided. After receipt of the report, confirmation of the exact cause of death is affirmed and that cause of death is recorded in the respective established Death Registers.

**END**