

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1142. Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1) With reference to the target of 5000 force employment hours flown by the SA Airforce (SAAF) in the 2016-17 financial year, (a) what are the reasons for the SAAF only achieving 58% of its targeted employment flight hours in the third quarter and (b) to what extent did the lack of serviceable aircraft at (i) 35, (ii) 41, (iii) 44 and (iv) 28 Squadrons affect this target;

(2) (a) what are the reasons for only flying 155.7 VIP hours in the specified period, (b) how many of the specified VIP flight hours were flown with Inkwazi, (c) how many of the specified VIP flight hours were flown in leased aircraft and (d) what was the total cost incurred to lease these aircraft;

(3) (a) how many of the force employment hours flown by the SAAF, excluding VIP hours, in the specified financial year were flown in leased aircraft and (b) what were the costs in each case? NW1282E

**REPLY:**

(1) (a) This question is ambiguous largely due to the fact that the 5000 flying hours was an **annual** target for the 2016/17 FY. This target was divided into 4000 hours for the Joint Force Employment Requirements (JFER) as will be tasked by the Chief of Joint Operations whilst the other 1000 was an annual target for the Very Very Important (VVIP) Unit. Therefore, the total hours flown both for the VVIP Unit and JFER is 989.4 hours for the third quarter. Furthermore, the availability of aircraft was the major factor for not achieving the targeted flight hours during the third quarter. It must also be noted that length turnaround time by local service providers has also had an influence in the low availability of aircraft, a matter which is being addresses.

(b) (i) 35 Squadron. The C47-TP fleet is a legacy system. Flight safety and airworthiness issues restricted the aircraft from flying.

(ii) 41 Squadron. Due to a maintenance contract not being in place for the Cessna Caravan C208, flying ceased during September 2016.

 (iii) 44 Squadron. The current fleet exists of only 3 aircraft. Since September 2016, only 1 aircraft has been available for flying missions, the other 2 aircraft were unavailable due to unserviceability.

 (iv) 28 Squadron. This platform over achieved the required target of flying hours in the quarter under review.

(2) (a) Again this question is ambiguous as it is not clear whether the 155.7 VIP hours referred to were annual or quarterly hours flown.

(b) A total of 195.5 flying hours were flown with Inkwazi during the FY2016-17.

 (c) No hours were flown on leased aircraft.

 (d) No cost incurred as there were no aircraft leased.

(3) a) No force employment hours were flown by the SAAF on leased aircraft.

 (b) No cost/s were incurred.