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**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1143. Mr M A Mncwango (IFP) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veternas:**

(1) Why is the SA National Defence Force still unable to successfully prevent the infiltration of our national parks by poachers, in spite of the fact that these parks and their perimeters are policed and patrolled by trained military personnel, drones, and helicopters which make extensive use of night vision and detection equipment;

(2) has this matter been investigated by her department; if so, what were the findings of the specified investigation;

(3) did her department conduct an investigation on any form of collusion that may exist between military personnel and the poachers, which is allowing the poachers unfettered access to our national parks; if not, (a) why not and (b) what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details of the specified investigation? NW1280E

**REPLY**:

(1) The SANDF’s primary mandate is to safeguard the integrity of our international borders. The SANDF conducting operational tasks such as listening posts, observation posts, foot and mobile patrols, reaction forces conducted in conjunction with SANPARKS and the SAPS, specifically for the Kruger National Park. Technology and air support are being utilised as a force multiplier to achieve successes. The SANDF is not the lead department in the Kruger National Park. The SAPS and SANPARKS are the lead Government Departments and the SANDF is in support.

(2) No formal investigation was conducted. An Informal discussion between the SANDF, Chief of Joint Operations (C J Ops) and SANPARKS have taken place in January 2016, with specific reference to refining of the cooperation at the Joint Operational Centre (JOC) level in the Kruger National Park for effective and maximum deployments.

(3) It must be categorically stated that there are no form of collusion between the soldiers and poachers. During the conclusion of the recent informal discussions the following aspects were highlighted;

 (a) More soldiers were required due to the vastness of the area to

 effectively minimise the infiltration into the Kruger National Park.

 (b) Closer and effective cooperation between the various role players must be achieved and remains the objective.