**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 1275**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 19 JUNE 2020**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 03 JULY 2020**

**Mr W Horn (DA) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

What was the total number of criminal cases deemed as being part of the backlog roll in (a) regional courts and (b) district courts on (i) 25 March 2020 and (ii) 25 May 2020?

**NW1643E**

**Reply:**

The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and the National Prosecuting Authority, define backlog cases as cases being in the backlog based age analysis of the court roll. For the district courts, cases that are older than six months will be regarded as being in the backlog, while for the regional courts, cases which are older than nine months will be regarded as being in the backlog.

At the end of March 2020, a total of 194 225 cases were carried forward to the next financial year that commenced in April 2020. In addition to the cases carried forward, a total of 70 667 cases were enrolled during the lockdown period in April and May 2020, the majority of which were postponed to a date after the lockdown period.

The disruption in the optimal use of courts resulted in an increase in the number of outstanding cases in the lower courts. At the end of May 2020, compared to the outstanding roll and backlog cases at the end of March 2020, the outstanding case-loads in (a) Regional Courts, increased by 1%, and (b) in District Courts, by 18%.

A similar increase was noted in the backlog of cases. At the end of May 2020, the backlog of cases in (a) the Regional Courts, increased by 14%, and (b) in the district courts, by 63%.

**END**