

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1400. Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1) With regard to her announcement that a Ministerial Committee of Investigation into the illegal transportation and storage of the Cuban drug, Hebron Alfa 2b Interferon, by the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) will be appointed, (a) what are the reasons that (i) the appointment of the specified committee was not announced at the end of January 2021 according to her scheduled media briefing for the purpose and (ii) subsequent to the postponement, the appointment was not yet announced and implemented on 25 February 2021, (b) on what date will their appointment be announced, (c) what are the time frames for the (i) final report, (ii) details of the terms of reference and (iii) allocated budget;

(2) who are the three members of the specified committee and what are the reasons for their selection;

(3) what are the reasons that they are being vetted by the Department of State Security, given that the matter is an SANDF matter and that the outcome will be in the national interest and discipline of the SANDF;

(4) will she confirm that the work of the investigation committee will be transparent with regular progress reports to the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1594E

**RESPONSE**

(1)(a)(i) and (ii) Non-availability of members who agreed to serve on the Task Team for various reasons relating to health, other commitments etc led to a further search for members to serve on the Task Team.

(b) The appointment was announced once members were appointed on 1 March 2021.

(c) (i) The Task Team is expected to finalise their report into all matters relating to their mandate within 6 months as of 1 March 2021.

(c) (ii) The task team is to investigate the allegations contained in 3 separate submissions: (i) An anonymous report of October 2019 alleging fraud, corruption and misuse of State funds in the Department of Defence (DoD), particularly in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF); (2) A submission made to the State Capture Commission by Maj Gen (ret) Sizani and Maj Gen B Ngcobo which similarly contained serious allegations of alleged criminal activity in the environment of the Defence Intelligence Division; and (3) A memorandum from Maj Gen L. Ford outlining concerns regarding some procurement irregularities by the SANDF in the purchasing of Interferon-B from the Republic of Cuba when Coronavirus reached our shores in March 2020.

(c)(iii) Members of the Task Team not in the employ of the State are remunerated hourly rates as prescribed by National Treasury for Commissions / Committees of this nature and must submit time sheets to claims such on a monthly basis.

(2) Members of the Task Team were selected based on their knowledge and understanding of Government and especially the security cluster. The Chairperson is Mr Zola Ngcakani and the other two members are Dr RC Lubisi and Mr B Masethla.

(3) As can be noted from their Terms of Reference they will be investigating the environment of Defence Intelligence and as such it is best suited that they be vetted by another security agency.

(4) The final report will be shared with the relevant oversight structures in a manner that will be dictated by the nature of the findings and recommendations given that some of it relates to the environment of Defence Intelligence, which may be better shared with the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence.