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| **PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**  **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY** |

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION: 1454**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 03 JULY 2020**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 17 JULY 2020**

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

What total number of (a) the 14 647 inmates who benefited from the remission of sentences announced on 16 December 2019 by the President of the Republic, Mr M.C Ramaphosa, are among the 19 000 inmates due to be released as part of the   
COVID-19 parole dispensation and (b) inmates only qualified to be released because they have benefited from both the 2019 remission and the criteria applicable to the COVID-19 parole dispensation? **NW1825E**

**REPLY:**

Special Remission refers to a reduction of the sentences of incarcerated offenders, probationers and parolees with a period as determined by the President. On   
16 December 2019 the President of the Republic, Mr M.C Ramaphosa announced the reduction of sentence for all sentenced offenders including probationers and parolees by 12 months. An additional 06 months special remission was granted for categories with non-violent crimes.

The special parole dispensation due to COVID-19 means that the selected low risk offenders’ minimum detention periods were advanced for consideration for placement.

1. None. The 14 647 inmates referred to are those whose sentences (due to the remission), expired resulting in them exiting the correctional services system.
2. Due to long sentences imposed by the courts, a total of 9 617 offenders benefitted from the 2019 Special Remission and they did not qualify for release and placement on parole. However, the 2020 COVID-19 Special Parole Dispensation has advanced their dates for consideration of parole placement.

As indicated, only low-risk offenders who meet all the requirements and conditions for placement on parole, will be placed on parole. The requirement that only offenders who have undergone relevant rehabilitation programmes aimed at addressing their offending behaviour would qualify for placement as this would minimise the risk of re-offending.

Every qualifying sentenced offender’s profile will be assessed and considered individually by the Parole Boards before they make their recommendations for placement on parole. This will include affording victims the opportunity to make representations why an offender should not be placed on parole. All relevant factors will be taken into consideration during this process, which will include any prior convictions for violent offences committed.

**END**