

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1667. Dr P J Groenewald (VF Plus) vra die Minister van Verdediging en Militêre Veterane:**

(1) Of enige regterlike amptenare sogenaamde gevegsgereedheid-opleiding, wat ‘n staptog in die Drakensberge behels, moet voltooi; so ja, (a) vanaf watter datum dié vereiste reeds geld, (b) hoe lank die opleiding reeds plaasvind, (c) wat die doel van die opleiding is, (d) wat die relevansie van dié opleiding vir regterlike amptenare is en (e) of die opleiding enigsins ‘n voorvereiste vir bevordering is;

(2) wat die (a)(i) rede was dat twee helikopters ontplooi moes word vir die opleiding wat vanaf 30 Junie 2020 tot 3 Julie 2020 in die Drakensberge plaasgevind het en (ii) koste verbonde aan dié ontplooiing was en (b) rede was dat hulp van die KwaZulu-Natal bergklimklub ingeroep moes word;

(3) (a) wat die rede was dat die hoof van die regsafdeling (naam en besonderhede verstrek) teenwoordig was en (b) indien die vermelde persoon voorheen die staptog op militêre onkoste voltooi het, op watter datum dit plaasgevind het;

(4) wat die rede is dat die regterlike amptenare nie hul opleiding ter voorbereiding van buitelandse ontplooiing by Port St. Johns kan ontvang nie;

(5) of sy ‘n verklaring oor die aangeleentheid sal doen? NW2057A

***(Translation):***

**[Dr P J Groenewald (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:†**

(1) Whether any legal officers have to complete so-called combat readiness training, which comprises a hike in the Drakensberg mountains; if so, (a) since what date has the specified training been a requirement, (b) how long has the training been taking place, (c) what is the goal of the training, (d) what is the relevance of such training for legal officers and (e) whether the training is a prerequisite for promotion;

(2) (a) what was the (i) reason for deploying two helicopters for the training which took place from 30 June 2020 to 3 July 2020 in the Drakensberg mountains and (ii) total cost related to this deployment and (b) reason for enlisting the assistance of the hiking club from KwaZulu-Natal;

(3) (a) why was the head of the legal department (name and details furnished) present and (b) if the specified person had completed the hike on a previous occasion at military cost, on what date did it take place;

(4) why can legal officers not complete their training at Port St Johns in preparation for their overseas deployment;

(5) whether she will make a statement on the matter? NW2057E]

**REPLY**:

1. Yes.

 a. Since 2017.

 b. The Exercise has been taking place for over four (04) years.

c. EXERCISE MAFADI is the official Field Exercise after at the end of the Battle Handling Course for Military Law Practitioners (MLPs). It is also Combat Readiness Exercise for the Defence Legal Service Division (DLSD) in order to prepare MLPs to provide legal support to operations in terms of the Legal Support Doctrine.

d. The primary objective of the EX MAFADI is to prepare Military Law Practitioners to support internal and external operation in terms the Operations Legal Support Doctrine. To teach them their role during Joint Military Operations with other state departments, Peace Keeping Missions and during War.

The aim is also to enhance their leadership skills and to teach them other important military skills such as Navigation, Map work and Radio communication. Thereby MLPs that took part in EX MAFADI are deemed and certified Combat Ready by the Division.

e. EX MAFADI alone is not a prerequisite for promotion; Military Law Practitioners are required to attend their respective Service Promotional Courses before they can be promoted to the next rank. However, EX MAFADI is the Practical Part of the Joint Battle Handling Course (JBHC) for Junior Military Law Practitioners. Military Law Practitioners must have successfully completed the JBHC (including Ex MAFADI) before they can be considered for promotion.

2. a. (i) On 28 June 2020 a South African Air Force, Oryx helicopter from 15 Squadron, Durban was dispatched to rescue a member who had taken a fall and could not continue with the exercise. The member was airlifted taken to Greys hospital in Pietermaritzburg where she was treated for minor injuries. She has since recovered. The cost of the Oryx deployment was **R 163.582.00** (R71, 123/ hour for two (2) and half hours).

On 01 July 2020 an Oryx was dispatched again to conduct a Search and Rescue Mission for members from 7 Medical Battalion Group, who were also conducting a Military Exercises in the area. (b)The Mountain Club of South Africa members were involved because of their familiarity with area. The cost of the Oryx deployment was **R 284,492**. (R71, 123/ hour for four hours).

3. a. EX MAFADI is a Divisional exercise therefore the Head of the Division must either command the exercise personally or delegate command to other duly qualified Officers. In this case the Adjutant General appointed all other relevant commanders such as the Exercise Commander, Company Commander and Platoon commanders and he was also present as the overall overseer to ensure that the objectives of the exercise were achieved.

b. EX MAFADI is a not a hike but a Military Exercise authorised by Defence Legal Services Division. An exercise scenario is developed to simulate a certain military problem and the exercise is conducted accordingly. All military exercises are conducted at state expense. EX MAFADI was conducted over the following time periods.

 - EX MAFADI I- 15 till 21 October 2017 (Reconnaissance).

 - EX MAFADI II- 27 December 2017 till 03 January 2018.

 - EX MAFADI III- 28 January till 08 February 2019.

 - EX MAFADI IV- 26 June till 03 July 2020.

4. EX MAFADI is the Combat Readiness Exercise for DLSD and the training at Port St Johns is the Mission Readiness Exercise for Joint Operations Division.