**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER No.16**

**QUESTION NO 1681**

 **Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans**1. With reference to the controversial visit by the sanctioned vessel, the Lady-R, in early December 2022 when she was allowed to berth in the Simonstown Naval Base, what are the reasons that the (a) specified vessel was not docked in any Portnet commercial port to offload her cargo and reload goods and (b) commercial Russian vessel was allowed to dock in the Simonstown harbour which is the biggest naval base in the Republic and a national strategic key point;

2. (a) who authorised the berthing of the vessel and (b) what criteria were used to allow the berthing;

3. whether any investigations have been conducted into the authorisation and/or possible irregularities; if not, why not; if so, (a) has any person been held accountable and charged since and (b) what are the relevant details;

4. what (a) are the reasons that she never issued any statement in December 2022 or thereafter on the controversial visit and nature of the goods offloaded from and loaded onto the Lady-R and (b) is the nature and description of the cargo offloaded during night hours from the Lady-R and transported in containers on trucks arranged by AB-Logistics from the naval base;

5. Whether she will furnish Mr S J F Marais with copies of the relevant import, export and transport permits; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**REPLY:**

 **(1) – (5)** As stated in many previous public statements and I reiterate that nothing was loaded onto Lady R, but rather, Lady R was delivering equipment that was ordered by SANDF pre –Covid in 2018/19. When the pandemic struck it affected every aspect of our lives and things came to a standstill. Thus the delay delivery of the equipment. We want to reiterate that the order for such a delivery stands and that there was no export of anything from our entities through Lady R.

The President of the country and Commander in Chief of the South African National Defence Force, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa has appointed an independent panel under the chairmanship of Judge Mojapelo to conduct an inquiry into the Russian ship, Lady R.

Any disclosure could reasonably prejudice the investigation or may result in a contravention or possible contravention of the law, on conclusion of the inquiry which is about to commence or is in progress.
It is therefore prudent that the panel be granted space and time to finilize its investigation and to bring this matter to its ultimate conclusion within its mandate.

 **(T.R. MODISE)**

**MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: MP**