### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: (PQ) NW183E**

**PUBLISHED IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO: 2 OF 2017 (question nr 172)**

**Mr R A Lees (DA) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

a) Whether, with reference to her reply to question 318 on 31 March 2016, the Government has taken any further action to secure the release of Mr Stephen McGowan; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the relevant details of the further action the Government took in order to secure his release since her reply and (b) what are the relevant details of the action that the Government intends to take in order to secure his release;

b) Whether she has any knowledge of (a) where the specified person has been held and (b) by whom; if not, in each case, why not; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;

c)Whether the Government is working with and/or assisting any non-governmental organisations to secure the release of the specified person ; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of the (a)non-governmental organisation and (b)assistance being provided to the specified organisations?

**REPLY:**

(a) Yes -Government is involved in a continuum of actions securing the release of Mr Stephen McGowan, involving support from any of the Government Departments when needed. Actions were taken since March 2016, including, but not limited to, considering every viable option to ensure his release. Government continued to liaise with other Governments and agencies who may contribute to effect the release of Mr McGowan. Disclosing any details of actions taken at this stage will not serve a proper purpose but the House should know that Government did not leave any stone unturned to secure the release of Mr McGowan and will continue to assign resources and sincere efforts to ensure his return to South Africa..

(b)The exact location of Mr Stephen McGowan is not known, because it is a known trend of the captors to move their captives with regular intervals, ensuring their safety and security. Different groups are publicly known to capture tourists in Mali and, although more information about the group may be sourced, providing more information on the group is not in the interest of the matter being dealt with.

(c)Government is working with many other Governments and agencies in an effort to effect the release of Mr Stephen McGowan. Providing details on each of these organisations at this stage may compromise his safety.

 UNQUOTE