**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 1748**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 04 JUNE 2021**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 21 JUNE 2021**

**Mrs T P Msane (EFF) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

In light of the fact that many Magistrates Courts in the Republic postpone cases due to the lack of interpretation services, which is a disadvantage to many South Africans, especially black persons, what (a) total number of cases are postponed daily in the courts due to the lack of interpretation services and (b) are the reasons that his department is not hiring interpreters?

**NW1959E**

**REPLY:**

1. As part of monitoring of administrative support to the courts the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) has included a Key performance indicator on the Annual Performance Plan which is monitored monthly. The Department has set a target that in less than 0.3 % in criminal cases the main cause of postponement of the case should relate to the unavailability of court administrative officials essential to a court sitting relating to Indigenous language as well as Foreign language interpreters as well as court recording system operators.

The performance in relation to this indicator for the period 1 April - 30 April 2021 is a National average of 0.14% against the 0.3% target.

See breakdown into regions and District and regional courts as per table below:



1. The Department is appointing interpreters as and when positions become vacant. The Regional Heads have delegations to advertise and fill the vacancies where required. Currently, the Department has a vacancy rate of 7.7%. The table below depicts the number of positions on the establishment, number of posts filled as well as the number of vacant positions:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Job Title** | **Filled Posts** | **Vacant Posts** | **Total Posts** | **Vacancy Rate** |
| Court Interpreter | 1 262 | 88 | 1 350 | 6.5 |
| Senior Court Interpreter | 396 | 49 | 445 | 11.0 |
| Court Interpreter Principal | 63 | 8 | 71 | 11.3 |
| Assistant Director: Court Interpreting | 32 | 1 | 33 | 3.0 |
| Deputy Director: Court Interpreting | 6 | 1 | 7 | 14.3 |
| **TOTAL** | **1 759** | **147** | **1 906** | **7.7** |

In relation to Foreign Language Interpreters and Sign Language Interpreters, they are sourced from the database as and when they are required, paid a daily allowance for appearance in court.