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

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 1834**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 21 AUGUST 2020**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 11 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**Mr P Sindane (EFF) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

(a) What total number of (i)(aa) prison officials and (bb) inmates have been affected by COVID-19 to date and (ii) the specified persons have since died in each case and (b) how is his department dealing with overcrowding in correctional centres during the lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19?  **NW2228E**

**REPLY**

(a)(i) (aa) A total of **4 136** officials have been infected with COVID-19 as at 23 August 2020.

(bb) A total of **2 336** inmates have been affected by COVID-19 as at 23August 2020.

(ii) A total of **60** officials and **43** inmates have died due to COVID-19 related illnesses as at 23 August 2020.

(b)The President of South Africa in terms of section 84(2)(j) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, read with section 82(1)(a) of the Correctional Services Act, 1998 (Act No. 111 of 1998) and for the purpose of addressing, managing and combatting the spread of the COVID-19 virus in all Correctional Centres in the Republic, authorised the consideration and placement on parole of certain category of sentenced offenders, who are or would have been incarcerated on 27 April 2020 subject to such conditions as may be approved by the Correctional Supervision and Parole Board under whose jurisdiction such sentenced offenders may fall.

The Special Parole Dispensation was announced by the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services on 08 May 2020. Approximately 19 000 sentenced offenders who committed non-violent crime and were left with 60 months or less before the minimum detention period (MDP) will be released on parole.

* As at 20 August 2020, a total **10 153** offenders have been **released** on Special Parole Dispensation.
* The inmate population on **20 May 2020,** (releases started on this date) was **155 069** which translated into an occupancy level of **130.78%** and an overcrowding level of **30.78%.**
* The inmate population as on 20 August 2020, was **138 070**, which translates into an occupancy level of **114.52%** and an overcrowding level of **14.52%.**
* Since the commencement of the implementation of the 2020 Covid-19 Special Parole Dispensation the department down managed overcrowding in correctional centres with an overall of **16.26%** (from **155 069** to **138 070)**
* The above are examples of how the Department of Correctional Services is successfully dealing with overcrowding in correctional centres to curb the spread of COVID-19.
* The Department also recommend that the Courts should consider alternative sentencing as this will also assist with the management of the COVID-19 in correctional services.

**END**