# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2030**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 34)**

**Ms H Ismail (DA) to ask the Minister of Health:**

In view of many recent reports of family members burying the wrong body instead of their loved ones, what (a) measures are put in place to ensure that undertakers do not mix up dead bodies as strain on the sector increases with the steep rise in Covid-19 deaths and (b) security measures are placed at the mortuaries to ensure the safety of bodies?

###### NW2591E

**REPLY:**

1. The Department has made provision in the Health Directions published on the 17 July 2020, paragraph 9(5) which states that: “once in the hospital or private mortuary, the body bag may be opened for family members (one at a time) to view the human remains”. This provision allows family members to view their loved ones and the current standard of labelling human remains still applies and there should not be challenges if everyone plays their roles. The normal practice of viewing human remains at home out of the mortuary is considered high risk and therefore prohibited to protect the funeral attendees.
2. All funeral undetakers are required to have a certificate of competence in order to operate. This certificate ensures that mortuary premises meet the minimum standards provided in the regulations. Government cannot provide security services to these facilities as they are privately operated but owners can provide such security services. Government mortuaries are within health facilities and most of these facilites have access control.

END.