**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2611**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 27 – 2022**

**2611. Ms T A Khanyile (DA) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

(1) With reference to allegations that his department spent R300 million to pay certain companies (names furnished) to upgrade the Home Affairs National Identification system to an automated biometric identification system, but that it was never completed (details furnished), what steps has his department taken to recover the amounts it has paid with nothing to show,

(2) whether his department intends to claim damages due to nonfulfillment of the contract; if not, why not; if so, what are the time frames in this regard;

(3) what disciplinary action has his department taken internally against its (a) employees and (b) managers who (i) oversaw the contract for over a 5-year period without reporting non-performance and (ii) authorised payment to the specified company and/or its subcontractors despite no work being completed? NW3127E

**REPLY:**

1. There has been a deliberate misinformation campaign on this ABIS issue and we were shocked to read a headline on a Sunday paper that claimed that Home Affairs has blown R300 million. Another one followed a few days later and claimed that the amount that has been blown is R450 million rand. It looks like there was a competition to misinform. On 2 August 2022 I did address this matter in my media response to these claims and outlined that an amount of R113 million was spent on hardware which is still in our possession and the warranty of the hardware is still valid. R110 million was spent on software that the project is still using and EOH delivered project services worth R56 million. The Department has outlined the steps it was taking to recoup its money in the form of penalties from EOH for not completing the project on time, as stipulated in the original contract. That legal process is on-going.

1. In relation to the current service provider for the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS), the department has already invoked penalty clauses for missing delivery deadlines.
2. The ABIS contract is milestone based meaning that once certain milestones are completed the department is duty bound to pay for the cost of the milestone. It must be noted that the recommendations of the forensic audit which was presented to the Portfolio Committee are being implemented. Names of those involved in any wrongdoing have been submitted to the Hawks, and other law enforcement agencies. Home Affairs has already opened a criminal case against certain individuals at the Pretoria Central Police Station on 5 March 2021. The case number is CAS 145/3/2021.

**END**