**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 2697**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 29 – 2022**

**2697. Mr V Zungula (ATM) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

(1) In light of the arrest of the Pakistani kingpin who fraudulently issued visas and passports to Pakistani nationals, what (a) charges did he bring against corrupt Home Affairs officials and (b) action will be taken to deter such behavior;

(2) whether he and/or his department will formally lay charges against all Pakistani nationals who fraudulently obtained South African documents and visas, and compromised our national security; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(3) whether he and/or his department will screen all visas, identity documents and passports issued to all Pakistani nationals, to verify whether they are holders of legally issued passports; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

(4) what steps will he take against non-citizens who acquired South African documents illegally? NW2881E

**REPLY:**

(1)(a) Home Affairs officials who were found to be working with the Pakistan Kingpin have been taken to DC and expelled from the Department. Others have been arrested for fraud and corruption and the cases are ongoing. The Hawks are still continuing the investigations and we expect more arrests.

(1)(b) The actions taken are divided into four (4) main categories. Viz:

* Consequence Management as dismissals, arrest and charges of fraud and corruption.
* The Department has just created and filled a new post of Chief Director Prevention and Analysis. This job is to analyse all our systems, pick up gaps and weaknesses and provide a way to close up such weaknesses in order to prevent fraud.
* Technology improved, e.g. moving away from our old biometric system which has only fingerprint and a photo to a new one which has a fingerprint, a photo, iris recognition, facial recognition and a palm print.
* Changing our standard operating procedures e.g. in the past third parties could go to any Home Affairs office to collect a passport and hand it over to the owner. Now after this event, a passport can only be collected from the office where it was applied for, and only the owner can collect it after activity if in the office with their own fingerprint.

1. Yes, we certainly are doing so, and not only for Pakistani Nationals, but for all people who fraudulently obtain our documents.
2. A team that was led by former Director-General in the Presidency, Dr Cassius Lubisi was commissioned to review all visas and permits that was issued by the Department to all foreign nationals (Not only Pakistani nationals) since 2004 to the end of 2021. Some of their findings have already been handed over to the hawks. The team also recommended that we appoint a multidisciplinary team consisting of investigators, data analysis, forensic experts, senior councils and IT experts. This team will be given the reports and do a deep-drive investigations into them so that they may prepare dockets, put up team to trace and deport and retrieve our documents. We are in the process of acquiring such a team through our procurement processes.
3. We follow legal procedures to retrieve our documents. Having done so, the person will be illegal and liable for deportation.

**END**