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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION 2785**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 14 September 2018**

**M J Cardo (DA) to ask the Minister of Economic Development:**

(1) (a) Which members of the Competition Commission’s executive committee received VIP protection services (i) in each of the past five financial years and (ii) since 1 April 2018, (b) for what period did each member of the commission’s executive committee receive VIP protection services and (c) what was the total cost to the commission of providing the specified VIP protection services;

(2) whether a security threat analysis was conducted by the SA Police Service in each case; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the details of the recommendation of each security risk analysis? NW3078E

**REPLY:**

I have been advised by the Commissioner of the Competition Commission, Mr Tembinkosi Bonakele, of the following:

1. The Competition Commission undertakes investigations into collusion and cartel activities in the economy and in the course of carrying out its responsibilities, it is privy to commercially sensitive information which may result in significant competition penalties being imposed on affected parties and the possibility of criminal charges being brought against individuals. In addition, significant vested interests in the economy may be affected by the work of the Commission.

2. The Competition Commission and senior staff have been subject to a spate of criminal acts, the source and purpose of which is not yet apparent in spite of these having been reported to the law-enforcement agencies, which warranted in the opinion of the Commission, the provision of security to a limited number of senior officials in order to ensure the safety of persons and sensitive information.

3. The criminal acts comprised of the following:

* on 25 May 2017 the Deputy Commissioner, while returning from a work assignment, was held at gunpoint and his work computer laptop, tablet and mobile phone, among other things, were taken.
* On 8 August 2017 there was a security breach at the Commission premises and two laptops containing sensitive evidence were stolen from the Cartels Division. This followed incidents where laptops and mobile phones belonging to, amongst others, the Commissioner were stolen under what the Commissioner described as ‘mysterious circumstances’.
* On 9 September 2017, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) was robbed at gun-point.

4. The Commission took measures which included the provision of private security to four senior staff members; terminating the services of the security service provider at the Commission premises; and commissioning a security assessment by a private service provider. The report pointed to some security gaps in the security of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Divisional Manager for Cartels. Further work is also being done on IT security systems and further upgrades will be done subject to budget availability.

5. In addition to the above, and following the request by the Commission, SAPS covers the security of former Chief Justice Ngcobo who is currently heading a panel appointed by the Commission to conduct a Market Inquiry into private healthcare, with the Commission providing vehicles for the SAPS members assigned to the former Chief Justice.

6. The total costs for the various Protection Services amount to R14,9 million, as follows:

* June 2017 – 31 March 2018 = R 14 607 748.
* 1 April 2018 – August 2018 = R 373 304.

7. The State Security Agency was approached to further investigate these incidents and it undertook to conduct a comprehensive assessment on the security requirements of the Commission and its report is imminent. The detailed security assessments will inform any further decisions on this matter, including whether to continue with security measures and the appropriate level of such services.

**-END-**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**(1c)** The total cost for providing private protection services from June 2017 to 31 March 2018 is R14 607 748. Total cost for providing private protection services from 1 April 2018 to August 2018 is R373 304. From June 2017 to March 2018 the cost reflect the amount for outsourced private security services. The security arrangement was revised and there was a reduction on the intensity of the services and most were insourced. The R373 304 is the total for outsourced private security services since 1 April 2018 until 31 August 2018 Total of cost of both period amounts to R14 981 051.