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

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 2799**

**Prof C T Msimang (IFP) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

What steps has his department taken to abolish the use of social networks by inmates which pose serious security risks in prisons? NW3270E

**REPLY:**

In order to provide a comprehensive response, the Department has maintained its policy of not allowing unauthorised communication devices which give the use primary access to such applications as Facebook, Twitter etc.

The Department continues to take various steps to prevent or reduce the use of unauthorized communication devices within Correctional Centres. These steps include the following:

* The launching of a Back-2-Basics security campaign aimed at reasserting the importance of basic security measures and competencies such as searching of persons and goods.
* The searching of inmate cells and belongings sporadically (at extraordinary times) to find and remove unauthorized communication devices that may have entered the Correctional facilities.
* The installation of cell-phone detection systems in various Correctional Centres to assist officials in the identification and removal of unauthorized communication devices. Cell-phone detection systems are currently in the process of being installed at 39 Correctional Centres.
* The Department is also in the process of installing 14 body scanners at 7 Correctional Centres to further assist officials.
* The Department has initiated a process of engagement with the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) to explore various technical and/or legal solutions – including but not limited to cell-phone jamming.
* The DCS is part of an inter-departmental process exploring technical counter-measures in part responding to gangs as a security threat group. This is a conscious effort to partner with other state law enforcement agencies in finding sustainable solutions to the holistic challenges (including integrity management of personnel).