# QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 2861 DATE OF QUESTION: 10 DECEMBER 2021

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 28 DECEMBER 2021**

**Mrs L F Tito (EFF) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

What (a) total number of new cases of inmates who have been infected by the Omicron variant have been recorded across the Republic and (b) new and/or additional measures have been put in place to curb the spread of the new variant in our overcrowded cells? **NW3381E**

# REPLY

1. During this period 03 – 09 December 2021, 125 inmates new confirmed COVID- 19 cases were reported across the regions, bringing the cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases in inmates to 6 988.

* The results from National Health Laboratory Services and other laboratories would not indicate the type of variant, but will be recorded as:

**“*SARS-CoV-2 RT- PCR: Negative or Positive”***

1. There are no new and /or additional measures that have to be put in place as all the public health and social measures and vaccinations remain the same despite the type of variant of the COVID-19 as outlined below:

* There is continuous targeted awareness and sensitisation such as promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene for inmates with regard to COVID-19 through different media as well as implementation of infection prevention and control (IPC) measures.
* Newly admitted inmates are quarantined and monitored for a period of 10 days and if asymptomatic, they are then integrated in the communal cells and those symptomatic are tested and managed according to the prescribed protocol.
* Inmates are screened for COVID-19 on a continual basis in order to ensure prompt identification of infected ones who will then be isolated, being managed symptomatically, and relevant contacts traced and quarantined. Those with COVID-19 related symptoms are provided with surgical masks to prevent any possible further spread, quarantined and specimens collected for testing following the prescribed protocol. Those with positive results are kept in dedicated isolation sites and managed symptomatically in compliance with the Standard Treatment Guidelines and Essential Medicines Lists (STGs and EML). Contacts of COVID-19 confirmed cases are traced in the facilities, quarantined and monitored in terms of the prescribed protocol.
* Implementation and compliance to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Preparedness, Detection and Response to COVID-19 (developed and approved) based on the National Department of Health (NDoH) Standard Operating Procedures for Preparedness, Detection and Response to COVID-19 and other relevant information from the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) in order to contain and mitigate COVID-19 infections in the correctional facilities.
* COVID-19 vaccines are administered to the inmates who have agreed to be vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity in the correctional facilities in mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**END**