

**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 287**

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**QUESTION PAPER NO: 02**

**Ms Z Majozi (IFP) to ask the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies:**

1. Following reports that government websites were down in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng,

Mpumalanga and North West, as a result of cable theft according to the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), what steps have been taken by her department to protect the relevant infrastructure against theft;

1. whether her department has had any communication with the SITA on measures to protect the infrastructure; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**NW298E**

**REPLY:**

**I have been advised by SITA as follows:**

1. Vandalism and theft of private sector operator infrastructure as well as that of State-owned Enterprises (SOEs), that have partnerships with SITA through contracted services, have been one of the biggest challenges, negatively impacting delivery of ICT services to government. These acts of vandalism and theft manifest as follows:

1. Overhead routes are targeted, where wooden poles are vandalised and stolen leaving optic fibre cables damaged.
2. Equipment facilities at various network sites are vandalised and batteries stolen, that negatively impact backup power that mitigates against load sheading or loss of power.
3. Rail infrastructure is targeted for various metals and other material, thereby damaging optic fibre cables that use the rail infrastructure routes.

1. Underground infrastructure routes are targeted through manholes for copper and other metals thereby damaging optic fibre cables. The incident that affected access to government websites on 8 February 2023 was related to this type of vandalism and theft.

There have been various interventions as follows:

1. SITA has been working with organisations owning the infrastructure to ensure speedy restoration of services to government.
2. Implementation of service improvement interventions with organisations owning the infrastructure, in the form of establishing alternative routing to improve the already existing layers of redundancy.
3. The South African Police Service (SAPS) and private security companies have been engaged through the relevant processes to address these acts of vandalism and theft. This is through frequent monitoring of targeted areas and investigations to hopefully apprehend those responsible.

(2) SITA has been in communication with its shareholder department, the DCDT, on these challenges and the required interventions to address these matters with the relevant stakeholders.

Thank You.

PQ 287: Hon. Z Majozi (IFP) to ask the Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies, **NW298E**