



## forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For oral reply)

QUESTION NO. 2915 {NO3365E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 32 of 2023

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**Mr M N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:**

What measures are in place to protect the coast and fishing grounds of the Republic against foreign fishing vessels?

### **2915. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:**

The following measures are in place to protect the coast and fishing grounds against foreign fishing:

#### 1. Administrative measures

##### (a) Advanced Request to Enter Port (AREP) notifications.

All foreign fishing vessels that intend entering the 200 Nautical Mile (NM) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for the purpose of calling into any port within the RSA are requested to notify the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) via an AREP. Foreign fishing vessels entering and traversing the EEZ do so for a number of reasons, for example, to enter port for refuelling or to replenish bunkers and water, or to discharge or trans-ship fish products, or for innocent passage, or for *force majeure* reasons. Depending on the reason for entering the RSA EEZ, the DFFE requires a vessel owner or a local shipping agent acting on behalf of the vessel owner to apply for a permit to enter the EEZ and/or a permit to enter the RSA EEZ with fishing gear on board; a written notification of innocent passage, with entry and exit dates, including GPS positions of each; a written request in the

case of *force majeure*; and whether or not a trans-shipment will take place. It must be noted that no trans-shipments are allowed at sea within the EEZ, only in a harbour or port. All relevant details must be supplied on the respective permit applications, such as where the fish was caught and details of the catch on board. The declaration must be truthful and correct, with law enforcement measures being implemented against intentional falsification of information.

## 2. International cooperation

2.1 The management of the sustainable utilisation of marine living resources and of the ocean ecosystems in general requires international cooperation. In this regard, there are a number of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) to which South Africa is a member.

- (a) RFMOs set standards in terms of which foreign fishing vessels entering foreign ports should be dealt with. The DFFE ensures that South Africa complies with these standards. One of the requirements is that foreign fishing vessels entering foreign ports should be inspected as a conservation measure.
- (b) RFMOs monitor member States to ensure that they implement the agreed measures. Consequently, the DFFE is also obliged to complete various questionnaires issued by RFMOs on a regular basis to ensure ongoing compliance and sustained deterrents to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.
- (c) South Africa is also a member of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation: Port State Measure Agreement (UNFAO: PSMA) that encourages South Africa not to allow its ports to be used by fishing vessels that are listed as IUU vessels. The DFFE ensures compliance to this measure.

## 3. Operational measures

- (a) **Port-based compliance:** As mentioned above, foreign fishing vessels in South African ports are inspected. The catch (fish) on board is checked against the manifesto of cargo on board and against what the vessel had declared when applying for their respective permits. Any trans-shipments in harbour are also monitored to ensure compliance.
- (b) **Sea-based compliance:** The DFFE operates a Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC), of which the primary function is to monitor the positions and movements of fishing vessels issued with permits to fish by the DFFE to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation. This monitoring is done via a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS).

As foreign fishing vessels are not required to have VMS units on board, they are monitored by means of an alternative vessel tracking system which uses an Automatic Identification System (AIS). Fisheries protection vessels also patrol our ocean wherein our inspectors conduct inspections on fishing vessels. The DFFE also conducts joint sea patrol with the South African Navy (SAN) through 'Operation Corona'. Sea-based and coastal-based joint operations also take place with the relevant law enforcement agencies as part of Operation Phakisa.



**MS B D CREECY, MP**

**MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

**DATE: 14/09/2023**