**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

Date of Publication: 30 September 2022

Ministry: 07 October 2022

Reply date: 14 October 2022

**3519. Mr D Bergman (DA) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

In light of the fact that Zimbabwe is heading to its watershed elections In 2023 while there are wide spread reports of alleged targeted harassment of opposition members by the government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa, which includes Mr Job Sikhala, a member of Parliament representing the Citizens Coalition for Change, who has been held in detention without trial in a maximum security prison for 100 days, what steps has the Government taken to (a) ensure that Zimbabwe’s political situation does not degenerate into full -blown political violence ahead of the 2023 elections and (b) appeal to the Zimbabwean government to release all political prisoners- unconditionally? **NW4332E**

**REPLY:**

1. South Africa and Zimbabwe use the Bi-National Commission (BNC) to discuss all matters of mutual interest, including political and security situations in both countries. It should be recalled that for the July 2018 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean Government invited international observers, a move that was commended by the international community. It would also be recalled that the 2018 Elections were pronounced as having proceeded relatively quiet, free, and fair, notwithstanding recommended areas of improvement, as per AU and SADC Election Observer Missions. The violence erupted following the disputing of the election results by the leader of the then MDC-T, and the subsequent government response is well documented. President Mnangagwa established a Commission of Enquiry on the post-election violence, which was chaired by former President Kgalema Mothlanthe. The recommendations were released in public, which in South Africa’s view, was an indication of the commitment by the Zimbabwean Government to their implementation.

South Africa believes in peace, security, and stability in the region. Free and fair elections are a prerequisite of good governance for the attainment of the SADC Vision 2050, and the aspirations of the AU’s Agenda 2063. South Africa participates in electoral activities of the region through the SADC Electoral Advisory Council and is always part of the SADC Observer Mission.

1. With regard to the Job Sikhala matter, we will make further enquiries on the nature of his imprisonment. South Africa does not support any form of detention without trial or administrative detention as this is referred to in some jurisdictions. We will engage further with our counterparts on matters such as these.

**COMPILER DETAILS**

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**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Minister signs Parliamentary Reply 3332

MR Z DANGOR

DIRECTOR–GENERAL: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

DATE:

PARLIAMENTARY REPLY 3332 IS APPROVED / NOT APPROVED / AMENDED.

COMMENT/S

DR GNM PANDOR, MP

MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

DATE:

**Additional information**

The Government of the Republic of South Africa has not yet received any communication for the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe regarding the forthcoming harmonised elections to be held in 2023.