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**3897.  Mr S L Ngcobo (IFP) to ask the Minister of Basic Education: to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

(1)       In view of reports that gang-related activities in secondary schools, theft and violence is on the rise, (a) what total number of incidents related to gang violence at schools since the beginning of 2022 have been reported to her department and (b) how has her department responded to such incidents;

(2)       what are the relevant details of the trends related to this type of gangsterism, including but not limited to (a) bullying and/or (b) physical attacks?

**Response**

**1 a Total number of incidents related to gang violence at schools**

The Department has received a total of **411** gang-related incidents.

**1 b The Department’s response to such incidents**

The Department has trained schools on the implementation of the **National School Safety Framework (NSSF)**, which is a guiding framework in addressing all forms of violent incidents in schools, including gangsterism.  The NSSF empowers schools to identify and manage all safety threats in schools; establish school safety committees, comprising of stakeholders, such as teachers, police officers, school governing body members, and learner representative council members.  Furthermore, the NSSF also empowers schools to develop incident reporting mechanisms; establish collaborations with external stakeholders, such as the South African Police Service (SAPS), the Department of Social Development, and civil society organisations; as well as develop school safety plans and policies to respond to safety challenges.

The Department has also empowered schools to develop and implement **Codes of Conduct** for learners.  These Codes of Conduct enable schools to address ill-discipline related to gangsterism, such as bullying, physical and verbal assaults, as well as the selling and distribution of drugs, truancy and theft in schools.

The Department also has **an established Protocol with the South African Police Service (SAPS)** to address crime and violence in schools, including gang violence.  The Protocol has enabled all schools to be linked to their local police stations.  SAPS conducts searches and seizures in schools, and conduct crime awareness campaigns in schools.  Regularly, schools work with SAPS, local community police forums and social workers to address gangsterism-related issues.  Regular searches and seizures of illegal drugs and weapons are done in schools and anti-gangsterism campaigns, in collaboration with the Department of Social Development and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, are conducted in schools.

The Department also encourages learner participation in sport and school enrichment programmes in order to promote healthy lifestyles.

**2 a The relevant details of the trends related to this type of gangsterism, including but not limited to (a) bullying and/or (b) physical attacks**

Bullying and physical fights committed by gangsters in schools are influenced by social issues, originating in the communities and spilling over to the schools.  In addition, gangsterism in some schools is also influenced by faction fighting between learners from different villages.  This form of gangsterism is common in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal.  Furthermore, gangsterism is closely linked to drug peddling in schools.