**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION**

 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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**406. Mr B N Herron (GOOD) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

1. In light of the fact that the Republic has shown clear support for Western Sahara and its independence from 2004, which has only increased as shown by the President’s statements in recent years, and noting that the South African Solidarity Movement for Western Sahara was established last year, what is the latest position of the Government on Western Sahara;
2. In view of the evidence that has come to light of Moroccan alleged bribery and spying and/or manipulation in collaboration with members of the European Union, what steps has the Government taken to safeguard the position and integrity of the African Union on Western Sahara and other matters? **NW440E**

**REPLY:**

1. South Africa’s position on the self-determination of Western Sahara is based on the principles of multilateralism and international legality in seeking a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara; the centrality of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) in the resolution of the conflict; the Constitutive Act of the AU, in particular the principle of the sanctity of inherited colonial borders in Africa and the right of peoples of former colonial territories to self-determination and independence; respect of international human rights law in the occupied territories, notably the right to freedom of association, assembly, movement and expression; respect of international humanitarian law and support for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the Saharawi refugees in a way that is predictable, sustainable and timely; and an end to the illegal exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of Western Sahara in the illegally occupied territory and the discouragement of the involvement of foreign companies in such activities**.**

South Africa consistently raises the issue of the right of self-determination of the people of Western Sahara during discussions on the matter at the UN and the AU and through bilateral engagements.

1. Concerning the position and integrity of the African Union on Western Sahara, it should be noted that South Africa completed its term as Chair of the African Union in 2020. To this end, South Africa cannot pronounce on behalf of the African Union on the matter regarding allegations of Moroccan bribery and spying activities. However, South Africa will to the fullest extent, ensure the safeguarding of its own position and integrity vis-à-vis Western Sahara. As a Member State of the African Union, South Africa will continue to support and champion the role of the African Union and its effective functioning.