

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**410. Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1) What are the overall objectives of hosting the annual Armed Forces Day celebrations, given the budget constraints and enormous need for financial resources in the SA National Defence Force;

(2) what was the (a) budget and (b) total actual cost of hosting the (i) 2016 and (ii) 2017 Armed Forces Days;

(3) why was the (a) Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality and (b) eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality selected to host the (i) 2016 and (ii) 2017 Armed Forces Days respectively? NW463E

## **REPLY:**

 (1) In 2012, the President of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) and Commander-in-Chief of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), President J.G. Zuma, proclaimed that 21 February will be observed and commemorated as Armed Forces Day. It is to be a day on which the South African population honours men and women of the South African National Defence Force by affirming its support and gratitude to them for upholding the Constitution of the Republic and defending the territorial integrity of the Republic and protecting its people. It is fortunate the Armed Forces Day 2017 coincided with the centenary commemoration of the sinking of the SS Mendi on 21 February 1917. To reciprocate, the SANDF also uses this annual event to strengthen its relationship with the broader population and to reach out to local communities.

 (2) The SANDF does not have an allocated budget for the Armed Forces Day and therefore the host Service (rotated amongst the Services on an annual basis) budgets for the corporate costs while all participating Services and Divisions budget for their participating members’ subsistence and travel costs.

1. The guideline prescribes an estimated budget of RM25.

1. The total actual cost of hosting is as follows:

(i) For 2016 Armed Forces Day: R 20 845 897.00.

(ii) For 2017 Armed Forces Day: R 24 777 028.00.

(3) Since its proclamation, the Armed Forces Day has been celebrated in five provinces, namely Gauteng, the Free State, the North West Province, Eastern Cape Province and KwaZulu Natal. It is the prerogative of the Chief of the South African Nation Defence Force to select the venue in which the Armed Forces Day is celebrated.

1. Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan in 2016 was part a provincial rotation; the venue was ideal for the host service, the SA Navy, to showcase its capabilities in a more tangible way than in the previous three years.
2. The eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality was recommended by the SA Army as the most suitable venue to celebrate the 2017 Armed Forces Day considering that it coincided with the centenary commemoration of the sinking of the SS Mendi.