**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.445**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 4 – 2021**

**445. Mr L H Arries (EFF) to ask the Minister of Home Affairs:**

(a) What steps has he taken to prevent cases of identity fraud from happening and (b) how much of this practice has he found is due to corruption by Home Affairs officials? NW500E

 **REPLY:**

a) Counter Corruption and Security Services has been established within the Department with a revised mandate to conduct constant research, analysis, implementation and monitoring with a view of preventing corruption and raising awareness around fraud and corruption. However the Department has partnered with the Department of Health (DoH) to ensure that each child is allocated with a birth certificate on the spot, by registering birth at health facilities. This will curb identity theft from the onset as an ID number gets allocated and remains with the child for life. The primary purpose is to ensure a credible population register, not vulnerable to theft and fraud.

With live capture the Department is able to identify applicants through online verification which has a direct interface with our Home Affairs National Identification System (HANIS) to identify persons through biometrics. Furthermore, during collection of Smart Identity cards, online verification is also performed to ensure that the correct enabling document is handed over to the appropriate clients. Moreover, the South African Smart ID card and passport have enhanced security features. The Department is moving away from paper to a paperless environment. The Department is thereby progressively phasing out the manual application process.

In addition, in terms of the Departments’ Information Security Policy, a model was built around proactive risk assessment and risk management where all users responsible for registering and capturing births and identity related applications within the domain of the organization, are assigned with biometric fingerprint authentication, to detect and hold users accountable for fraudulent activities.

b) Processes are evaluated by Branch Counter Corruption and Security Services to identify security breaches, vulnerabilities and loopholes and reports drafted and send to relevant sections to implement recommendations. However, each time Branch: Civics (CS) improve systems to close loopholes, criminals also changes their Modus Operandi against what has been put in place to prevent Identity Fraud. As they change their methods, Counter Corruption also found ways to identify those gaps and CS will implement by closing gaps where possible.

Identity Fraud does in most instances start from Birth Registration, especially Late Registration of Birth (LRB), where birth is registered after 30 days of even later than that.

 In that regard, committee were composed or formed in Provinces to sit and interview applicants in categories in order verify where and when did that birth occurred and in that case that is where in most cases foreign nationals “buy parents” to assist them obtain birth certificates and then Identity documents.

From the beginning of financial year 2020 – 2021, 33 cases of Identity fraud were investigated divided as follows:

• Quarter One (1) 14 cases were investigated

• Quarter Two (2) 5 cases were investigated

• Quarter Three (3) 8 cases were investigated

• Quarter Four (4) 6 cases were investigated

Finalised cases are not yet reported but will be reported by the end quarter 4.

**END**