**MINISTRY**

**JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 48**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 09 FEBRAURY 2023**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION:**

**Mr W Horn (DA) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

Whether, in light of the Draft Backlog Reduction Framework announced in March 2022 when it was revealed that the percentage of sexual offences on the backlog roll rose from 52% in March 2021 to 81,4% on 31 December 2021, the Backlog Reduction Framework has been (a) finalised and (b) implemented; if not; what is the position in this regard; if so, what (i) are the relevant details and (ii) percentage of the sexual offences in the criminal court is currently on the backlog roll?

**NW48E**

**REPLY:**

I wish to inform the Honourable Member as follows:

1. The Backlog Reduction Framework has been finalised and approved on 7 April 2022.
2. The Framework has been partially implemented.
3. The initial Phase was implemented with the establishment of the Departmental Backlogs Reduction Committee. At this stage, as part of the second phase of implementation and in order to establish a Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Stakeholders’ Forum, the Department has developed a National Integrated Criminal Court Optimization (NICCO) Framework and Governance Structure that seeks to address challenges to the efficient running of our courts in an integrated criminal justice system manner with the participation of all relevant stakeholder JCPS departments and entities. We are currently seeking the approval of the JCPS Directors-General Cluster to implement this Framework and Governance Structure which seeks to report to the JCPS Directors-General Cluster to ensure the responsibility and accountability of all stakeholder departments and entities to optimize the efficiency of our criminal courts.

In the meantime, the Provincial Heads of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD) are meeting with the JCPS role-players at the provincial level, and attending meetings of the Judges President of the Provincial Efficiency Enhancement Committees (PEEC) to discuss and unblock any blockages encountered in court performance at provincial level. Meetings of the Regional Efficiency Enhancement Committees (REEC) chaired by the Regional Court Presidents of the Provinces, as well as District Efficiency Enhancement Committees (DEEC) chaired by the Chief Magistrates or Judicial Heads of Offices are further attended, where the matters concerned are addressed at the Court levels.

1. It should also be noted that the percentage of the sexual offences in the criminal court, which are currently on the backlog roll as at the end of February 2023, is at 36, 9%.

Furthermore, the DoJ&CD is committed to collaborate with all the relevant stakeholders in the JCPS Cluster as well as the Judiciary to reduce the relevant backlogs, and thus improving citizens access to speedy and efficient justice.