

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

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

(1) With reference to the meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans on 8 July 2020, wherein it was revealed that the Department of Defence paid costs of R8,000,000 and R22,000,000 related to the COVID-19 pandemic for the flights and accommodation of Cuban health specialists, why was it required of her department to pay such costs while it was reported that the Department of Health and the respective beneficiary provinces will carry the costs related to the Cuban health specialists;

(2) whether her department has made any efforts to recover the costs from the (a) Department of International Relations and Cooperation and (b) Department of Health; if not, why not; if so, what are the further relevant details? NW539E

**REPLY**:

1. The Commander in Chief requested medical support from the Republic of Cuba to assist in curving the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. In response to the Commander in Chief’s request, the Cuban Government offered a team that consisted of a Medical Health Care Brigade. The Department of Defence (DOD) was allocated with military health care professionals. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) chattered an aircraft to transport the Cuban medical practitioners, who arrived in South Africa on 27 April 2020.

In adherence to the World Health Organisation COVID-19 regulations, the DOD established a quarantine centre for personnel entering the borders of the Republic of South Africa (RSA). The Cuban Medical Health Brigade was quarantined at the identified centre. On completion of the quarantine, there was a delay in securing accommodation in the different Provinces due to the Level 5 national lockdown.

Consequently both military and the civilian Medical Health Brigade from Cuba were transported in the SANDF chattered aircraft at the cost of R8, 227, 060. 00, and on arrival they were accommodated and quarantined at the identified quarantine centre at the cost of R22, 000, 000.

1. The DOD chattered an aircraft to transport the Cuban Medical Brigade in order to assist with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic within the SANDF. Therefore with the pandemic having affected the whole country, the department carried the cost. In the interest of the national objective to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DOD paid for accommodation, chattering and quarantine.