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| **PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**  **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY** |

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 637**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 05 MARCH 2021**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 19 MARCH 2021**

**Mr M.G.E Hendricks (Al Jamah-ah) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

Whether he and/or his department has been informed that since October 2020 prisoners of the Muslim faith have received no spiritual guidance during this challenging period under the COVID-19 regulations; if not, why not; if so, will his department look into the matter in order to reinforce spiritual guidance to Muslim prisoners? **NW755E**

**REPLY:**

Yes, Muslim offenders have been receiving Spiritual Care services and programmes continuously since October 2020.

The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) has an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Muslim Prison Board (NMPB) for provision of spiritual care services and programmes catering for the spiritual needs of Muslim inmates.

The MoU between DCS and NMPB was signed on 10 December 2014 and it was reviewed MoU and signed again 04 March 2020 in Pretoria wherein both parties cemented a well-established working relationship in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders. The MoU demonstrates commitment to continuous engagement and commitment to afford inmates belonging to the Muslim faith to practise their religion as outlined in the constitution of the country.

Annual meetings are convened to ensure co-ordination and planning in the provision of services and programmes to Muslim offenders.

Lastly, DCS Chaplains nationally, are co-ordinating the work of providing spiritual care services and programmes to all inmates including Muslim offenders daily.

**END**