

**MINISTRY FOR COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER 2021/773**

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**Mr A M Shaik Emam (NFP) to ask the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs:**

Whether, with regard to more municipalities being put under administration, the increasing protest actions and poor service delivery as a result of public representatives reporting to their political parties, she will put measures in place to ensure that all public representatives (a) account to the structures they are employed under and (b) are indeed in touch with the persons that they serve, so that the persons in turn are able to lodge complaints if they are not able to reach those public representatives; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NO923E

**REPLY:**

1. Councillors, as public representatives and as members of municipal councils, must adhere to a Code of Conduct for Councillors and must ensure strict compliance with all legislation when performing their responsibilities. The Municipal Structures Act presently provides for the establishment of portfolio committees to deal with specific focus areas, as well as an oversight committee, commonly referred to as the Municipal Public Accounts Committee (MPACs). The functions of the MPAC are to, in the main, review reports of the Auditor-General, the management committee, and the audit committee, and to then make recommendations to the municipal council on any matter affecting the municipality. The MPAC is also required to initiate and develop the oversight report on the annual report of the municipality, as required in terms of section 129 of the Municipal Finance Management Act.
2. Metropolitan and local municipalities that have established ward committees also use these committees to attend to community concerns and complaints. Ward committees are community representative structures meant to serve as official participatory structures in municipalities. These committees are chaired by ward councilors and serve as formal communication channels between the community and municipal councils. Ward committees are constituted by diverse interest groups to ensure inclusion of all sectors and vulnerable groups such as youth, women, religious groups, senior citizens, and community-based organizations. The Department supports the functionality of these structures through disbursement of the Local Government Equitable Share to cover Out of Pocket expenses for qualifying municipalities, capacity building for ward committee members and monitors the functionality of these structures on an on-going basis. In the absence of the ward councillor, members of the ward committees become a bridge between the municipality and communities.

In addition to ward committees, the Department is rolling-out GovChat, a social media-based community engagement platform that is implemented through an Open Government Partnership. Through GovChat, users can drop a location pin or physical address to know their public representative/ward councillor, lodge municipal service requests as well as rate and report service delivery in government facilities. The platform allows the public to lodge complaints and receive real-time feedback. Such will include service delivery complaints, non-adherence to covid-19 regulations as well as gender-based violence and femicide.