

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**807. Mr S Esau (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

(1) When is she going to institute an investigation into alleged transgressions of the provisions of the Defence Act, Act 42 of 2002, in respect of the (a) criteria used to employ persons as members of the SA National Defence Force (SANDF) Reserve Force and (b)(i) process and (ii) procedures involved in being employed as a SANDF Reserve Force member;

(2) (a) why are only certain SANDF Reserve Force members employed while others are not afforded an opportunity, (b) why are SANDF Reserve Force members who are in service not rotated and (c) how is the period of employment as a Reserve Force member determined;

(3) whether principles of fairness are implemented in the employment of the SANDF Reserve Force members, or is there good cause to believe that discrimination has been practiced in this regard;

(4) whether SANDF Reserve Force members are allowed to apply for military veterans’ benefits while not being employed by the SANDF; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW926E

**REPLY:**

1. At this stage there is no intention to launch an investigation.
2. (a) The Services are in control of the Reserves and call-ups are managed according to specific requirements over a specified period of time and for a particular number of people or particular rank requirements as determined by the Services and some Divisions within the structures of the Department of Defence. Such call-ups are largely controlled by the availability of financial resources.

(b) Rotation of Reserve Force members is encouraged at all times and the departmental policies do make provision for such in order to give members a fair opportunity to receive a call-up. This requirement is not always met accordingly due to budgetary constraints.

(c) The period of call-ups is determined according to the purpose and type of call-up, whether it is on a continuous or non- continuous basis and for the duration. The duration for external deployments is normally over 12 months and internal deployments over 6 months. In both cases, a period for pre- deployment training is also scheduled. Specialist skills are utilised according to departmental needs.

1. Reserve Force service is a voluntary service and the department always strives for the principles of fairness as a rule regarding Reserve Force utilisation. However, the current economic situation and the high unemployment rate place pressure on the unemployed Reserve Force member to become desperate for a call-up and would therefore always be regarded as not being treated fairly with no call-up. The Services do have a monitoring system in place to review Reserve Force utilisation on a quarterly basis.
2. According to policy requirements, Reserve Force members that are active in service are not allowed to be part of the Military Veterans and are not entitled to such benefits. The current practice is that members who would like to be registered on the Military Veterans Database in order to be entitled to the benefits thereof would officially request to resign from active Reserve Force service or be removed from the Reserve Force database.