**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**PALRIAMENTARY QUESTION NO: 883**

**DATE OF QUESTION: 13 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**DATE OF SUBMISSION: 30 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**Mr W W Wessels (FF Plus) to ask the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services:**

1. Whether, with reference to the reply of the former Minister to question 3669 on 11 December 2018, the backlog in the Pretoria offices of the Master of the High Court has been cleared; if not, (a) why not, and (b) by what date is it expected to be cleared;
2. Whether he will make a statement on the matter?

**NW2033E**

**REPLY:**

1(a) Currently, the Office of the Master of the High Court, Pretoria has a backlog in respect of Trusts. The reason is that since January 2019, it has been ascertained that 45 000 Trust files are missing. This has been caused by a storm that occurred when the files were still stored at Docufile and the roof of the facility was blown off which left many files being destroyed. The office, after removal of the files to Metrofile, has established a new database, and after diligent searches in the office, has now indicated that approximately 45 000 files are unaccounted for. This has also led to a backlog as dummy files need to be opened. However, this is exacerbated by the fact that before 2013, files were not kept on an automated system and clients do not have copies of all documents to open dummy files.

(b) The office, together with stakeholders, is trying their utmost best to address this backlog, and will be working overtime in the next three (3) months.

2. No.