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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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PROCEEDINGS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The House met at Nieuwmeester Dome at 15:00.

The Deputy Speaker took the Chair and requested members to observe a moment of silence for prayer or meditation.

AMENDMENTS OF RULES ON QUESTIONS

(Announcement)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is only one item on today's Order Paper, that is questions addressed to the Ministers in Cluster 1 - Peace and Security.

Hon members will recall that on 2 December 2025, the National Assembly agreed to amend Rules on questions for oral reply.

The amendments include that the number of supplementary questions to Ministers as well as the President and Deputy

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President, is increased from four to five. The member in whose name the question stands will have the first and last opportunity to put a supplementary question.

Hon members, order!

Furthermore, the questions time to Ministers is extended from three hours to three and a half hours, while allocated time for the President and Deputy President remains three hours. Parties have given an indication on which questions their members wish to pose a supplementary question. Adequate notice was given to parties for this purpose.

The members who will pose supplementary questions will be recognised by the Presiding Officer. In allocating opportunities for supplementary questions, the principle of fairness among others, has been applied.

When all the supplementary questions have been answered by the executive, we will proceed to the next question on the Question Paper.

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The first question has been asked the hon Sokhanyile to the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans.

Hon member, is that a point of order?

Mr M V DANIELS: Good afternoon, hon Deputy Speaker and colleagues. Thank you for your indulgence and acknowledging me, Deputy Speaker. I just wanted to draw your attention to something very important. South Africa is playing the T20 World Cup semi-finals today in India. Congratulations for reaching the milestone and we wish all the Protea power to the coach Shukri Conrad and the captain Aiden Markram. All the best for T20. Bring the cup home, boys. Thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, although that is not the usual procedure, but because I am a cricket fan, it is permitted.

[Applause.]

Hon members, we return to the questions.

QUESTIONS - CLUSTER 1: PEACE AND SECURITY

Question 3:

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The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, let me acknowledge Members of Parliament. In implementing the directives that have been referred to in the state of the nation address on 12 February of deploying the South African National Defence Force, SANDF, in the Western Cape and Gauteng against organised crime and illegal mining, a number of planning sessions have been undertaken by the relevant senior officers of the South African National Defence Force and the South African Police Service, SAPS, in the past two weeks since the tasking by the President.

Planning sessions with SAPS and other security cluster role players involve standard practice in many years of the Defence Force for the purpose of synergy, co-ordination, integration, deployment drills, joint mission readiness and training.

Furthermore, the planning sessions have also reconfirmed standing command and control applications as regulated in section 201(2) of the Constitution of our country, as well as section 19(3)(ii) of the Defence Act. This planning is in the final stages so as to ensure that constitutional requirements are fulfilled. Subsequent questions about indicators and all

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the other questions that have come under (a) and (b) would be responded to when the report is finalised.

I can assure the House that I got an assurance that in the coming days we will have the report and the plans ready and they have to go to the President who has to bring them to Parliament for compliance in terms of how you deploy the Defence Force. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Ms T SOKHANYILE: Deputy Speaker, to the hon Minister, is there any specific training or orientation that has been provided to the deployed SANDF members on rules of engagement, human rights compliance, community interaction protocols and the avoidance of excessive force when supporting civilian law enforcement in gang hotspots and illicit mining zones? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, I can assure members that there is a standing practice in the Defence Force to prepare for any deployment and the planning will involve how we mobilise and train people for a specific area of deployment. The standard procedures or the code of conduct of the defence force also comes in to make sure that

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uniform members don't abuse communities but comply and work within established standard procedures. So, I can assure the member that human rights will be protected and that training is a standard practice for any deployment readiness. In this case it will also be specific to the mandate that comes with this deployment. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Mr C HATTINGH: Hon Deputy Speaker, the previous deployment in illegal mining at Stilfontein saw the deaths of approximately 89 illegal miners confirmed, with possibly more than 100. Now, what measurable indicators is the department using to determine whether this deployment will actually assist to dismantle organised illegal mining syndicates rather than simply displacing desperate miners and resulting in a further loss of life? Is this military deployment solving the problem or merely managing its consequences? I thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Thank you very much, hon member, for the question. As I indicated in my response, the code of conduct for uniform members will be abided to and they are expected to abide by it and the protocols.

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Around the fact that they will be killing people and not protecting them, I wish to really state that I have no doubt in my mind that this is meant to save lives, and the incidents that happened in Gauteng, where locals can't even stay in their homes because they fear zama zamas, should stabilise for everybody, and that illegal miners don't have a license to kill and displace people but the whole community is assisted to settle down. So, that is the objective and not to kill anybody but to support everybody in the area and make sure that there is no bigger victim than the other. Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Rev K R J MESHOE: Deputy Speaker, while the ACDP welcomes the deployment of the SANDF in the Western Cape and Gauteng to combat gangsterism and illegal mining, we are concerned that this may only provide temporary relief. Gangsters and illegal miners may move to new areas to escape the SANDF only to return once the deployment has ended. They may also bribe army personnel to ignore their activities. The ACDP would therefore like to know whether the measurable performance indicators will include the permanent closure of mineshafts and drug dens and the arrest of illegal mining kingpins and gang bosses. If not, what would be those measures? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: I agree with you that sometimes if you deal with crime here you are making it migrate to the other areas. Hence other areas are worried that they will migrate to the next open mine. I think that is what the overall plan should be - not only the closing of mines that will save people but dealing with socioeconomic factors. I have already indicated to the President that once we go there with hard power of eliminating any wrongdoings, there is going to be a need for soft power to make sure that the gains ... it's good that this comes from ...

Sesotho:

... ntate moroti ...

English:

... to make sure that we can help communities rebuild themselves because these kinds of violence also undermine or tears the fabric of that community. So, I think the planning and whatever indicators should be able to make sure that there are no incidents elsewhere. However, without the plan, I will be misleading you into saying it would close that, but it is an important factor to consider making sure that it does not

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migrate from one area to another, and then you are not solving the problem. Thank you very much for the question.

Mr S S ZIBI: Deputy Speaker, to the hon Minister, these kinds of deployments usually require the Defence Force to divert funds from other obligations already approved by Parliament, resulting in a finding of unauthorised expenditure by the Auditor General. The question is, will the department be asking Parliament to appropriate funds specifically for this deployment in order to avert that finding?

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, in our last discussion on the matter, member Zibi, was that these deployments have not been budgeted for in our Defence Force budget. Therefore, the plan is that after completing the planning processes between us, SAPS and other agencies, we are going to approach the Presidency and Treasury with the plan to give us specific funds to deal with this problem so that we are not asked to pay with what we don't have because we don't have that money. So, we are hoping that Treasury and the Presidency will be able to identify funding to enable us to do this work. Thank you very much.

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Ms T SOKHANYILE: How best can we improve civilian military relations so as to ensure the success of the SANDF deployment, and how are we going to deal with the ill discipline if ever it occurs within the SANDF deployed? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Deputy Speaker, I can say at the least I have high confidence in the Defence Force as a very disciplined force that I have experienced, and I don't expect too many problems. Improving relationships between the National Defence Force and the public is another strong area that is there. Amongst the other branches that are there in the Defence Force, you would have seen during the Armed Forces Day, they have what they call Owethu which assist the Defence Force to go into communities and build relationships so that there is trust between communities and the SANDF.

The point I made earlier that as much as we want to move with hard power, it is very important to make sure that there is soft power which creates relationships and rebuilds communities. For instance, in the Western Cape, you can't just clean off gangsters and ignore the fact that gangsterism has torn the community apart and therefore there is a need to

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rebuild relationships, not only with the National Defence Force but in the communities themselves and the law enforcement agencies.

So, that is part of our thinking, but I can assure you that I have lots of confidence in the discipline of the Defence Force as part of their key training principle and orientation. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Question 72:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker, and greetings to the hon members of this august House, as I try to respond on behalf of Minister Lamola, who is currently on his official visit to Brazil, let me agree that indeed Minister Lamola received a report on the telephonic discussion between President Cyril Ramaphosa and the President of the Russian Federation, Mr Vladimir Putin, which took place on the 10th of February. The engagement, however, was consistent with our South Africa's foreign policy ... [Interjections.] ...

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Deputy Minister, just a moment. Hon Mente, what is your point of order?

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The convention of the House is that anyone who is accounting must stand. It is not looking good that we are answered by someone who is sitting down. We do not even see her. Can she stand up, please?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): ... I thought the member would appreciate that I am vertically advantaged. Then I can do that while speaking. I was still indicating that, yes, Minister Lamola was informed of the telephonic conversation between President Cyril Ramaphosa and the President of the Russian Federation, Mr Vladimir Putin, which took place on the 10th of February, which focused on the issues that are consistent with our foreign policy where we need to deal with issues of non-alignment, issues that we always subscribe to as a country.

Indeed, President Cyril Ramaphosa has engaged with all parties that are in the conflict within Russia and Ukraine. And you all know, hon members and the members of the public at large,

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that even last year, President Cyril Ramaphosa did receive President Zelensky in the Republic of South Africa. So, it is not a surprise that we will continue to engage with both the conflicting parties in every conflict to try to bring about mediation efforts in those conflicting areas. As a country, South Africa, that has consistently advocated for peaceful resolution of global conflict, South Africa remains committed to utilising all available diplomatic channels to encourage restraint and also support confidence-building measures and promote constructive engagement between the two parties that are involved.

Deputy Speaker, the two presidents also discussed broader aspects of our bilateral relationship, including areas of co-operation that we need to explore, utilising our multilateral forums such as the BRICS and the G20.

Furthermore, President Ramaphosa brought to the attention of President Putin the issue that was a concerning issue within the South African population that must deal with South African nationals that were at the forefront of the war zone in the Ukraine and Russia war that is ongoing. Indeed, I need to indicate here, that there has been progress in that regard

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where we have seen that those South Africans were safely brought back home in their areas of their communities where they originate from. Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Mr R SMITH: Deputy Minister, it is no secret that the Russian Federation is a deeply maligned actor on the international stage with a focus on destabilising democracy, projecting power and influence, and violating state sovereignty.

Given recent damning reports of Russian interference in South African democracy through the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, including cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns levelled against South African opposition parties, which amounts to an attack on our country's national security.

Will the Deputy Minister demarche the Russian Ambassador and put on terms South Africa's diplomatic relationship with the Russian Federation?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Thank you very much Deputy Speaker. Chairperson, the insinuation that indicates that the Russian Federation always interferes within our South African security

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system is somewhat misplaced, and I think I need to indicate to the hon member that through our own state security agency in South Africa, every time when there are incidences of this nature, we will be able to detect them and be able to combat them accordingly.

But what the hon member is insinuating is not factual, is not even founded, and when we do detect this kind of incident, South African State Security Agencies are more than able to respond to these kinds of incidences so that we protect the safety and the sovereignty of our country, South Africa. Thank you very much.

Mr M S MOELA: Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker. Deputy Minister, following the call, what engagement has the department initiated with other BRICS members? The African Union or the United Nations to build on the reported commitment to a diplomatic path, including any scheduled follow-up meetings that you have?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Thank you very much, hon Moela for that question. I think from where we are sitting, we need to

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engage within multilateral forums, whether it's BRICS, whether it's G7 or the G20, to make it a point that we leverage on the opportunities that are presented by those forums and other member states that continue to participate in those various forums.

We are now embarking fully as a country on issues of economic diplomacy through our various missions abroad, and I think hon members ought to appreciate that we utilise our missions abroad to deal with issues of economic diplomacy, where we need to leverage on the opportunities available for us to enter into a structured mechanism where we need to advance our own national interests as a country South Africa and see to it that we grow the economy of our beautiful country.

Mr W M DOUGLAS: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Hon Deputy Minister, in the light of ongoing global tensions arising from the continued conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and noting public statements that the Republic of South Africa remains committed to non-alignment and a negotiated political settlement, what specific diplomatic initiatives has the Republic undertaken, whether bilaterally or through multilateral platforms, to advance such a

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settlement, and what measurable outcomes have been achieved to date, and can we have a view of those agreements?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Thank you very much hon Douglas for that strategic question. We continue to relate very well with the Russian Federation at a diplomatic level and at a political level. We always have our Joint Ministerial Commissions with our counterparts in Russia, because at the centre of what we are doing through our foreign policy, it has to be how do we then champion our national interest as a country, because you must also appreciate the fact that South Africa continues to share those historic ties with the Russian Federation, because they were there for us during the apartheid regime, and it can be correct that today, during the South African dispensation, we tend to forget our strategic forces that were there for us when it was not fashionable to do so.

So, we will continue to engage with the Russian Federation from Bi-National Commission, BNC, and at a structured mechanism, with a Joint Ministerial Commission that we continue to have with the Federation of Russia, to suit to it

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that we champion our interest as the people of South Africa.
Thank you.

Ms N M MHLONGO: Regarding the matter of the Russian and Ukrainian Presidents, and Cyril Ramaphosa receiving a briefing, what was included in the commitment to a diplomatic solution between the two countries? According to the report the Minister received about the call, was the main purpose of the call not to thank and finalise the agreement for the return of the South Africans who mistakenly found themselves fighting with Russian forces in Ukraine? If so, why did the statement issued mention other issues for which there is no clear report, or will the Deputy Minister provide the report on the other issues mentioned in your response?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Thank you very much, hon Mhlongo. I always share this insight with hon Mhlongo and hon Douglas because they sit in the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Co-operation, on behalf of this Parliament. I need to indicate that President Cyril Ramaphosa, as the Head of State, is empowered by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to deal with issues of championing our foreign

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policy. And he is therefore engaging with his counterparts, whether it is within the Federation of Russia or anywhere in the world, to make it a point that we strengthen our diplomatic ties with those respective countries and we also co-ordinate ourselves as to how do we approach several multilateral forums that we continue to participate in, whether it is BRICS, whether it is the G7 or the G20.

The discussions that the two Heads of State have been having on the 10th of February were more focussing on how we strengthen our diplomatic ties and our collaboration efforts as we approach these multilateral forums. Whether it is BRICS, G20 or the G7, we need to caucus each other and see how best we can advance our own interests.

Hon Mhlongo, if you had listened carefully, central to the discussion, I indicated that the President of the Republic of South Africa brought to the attention of the President of the Russian Federation that we have South Africans stranded and at the forefront of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

Today, as we speak, those South Africans are safely back home in South Africa because of this initiative. Had it not been

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for the wisdom of the President of the Republic of South Africa in reaching out to his counterpart, all those brothers of ours would still be stranded in Russia today.

Mr R SMITH: Thank you, hon Deputy Speaker. Deputy Minister, the single largest threat to the security of South Africa's largest bloc trading partner, the European Union, is imperialist Russian aggression and expansion into European territory.

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues, it is not a war, it is the invasion of one state into another. Will the Deputy Minister condemn Russian aggression in the interests of South African trade and economic diplomacy to protect South African trade and jobs dependent on the European Union's security?

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity once again. I need to educate hon members of this august House in terms of the thrust of our foreign policy.

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The thrust of South Africa's foreign policy has always been centred on the following principles: Pan-Africanism, non-alignment, respect for human rights, and democratic values. We must always keep these guiding principles in mind when engaging with the rest of the world. We will continue to engage with any country if it is in South Africa's best interest, including our engagement with the Russian Federation led by President Putin. Thank you.

Question 21:

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Thank you very much for the question. Our response is that, indeed, maritime security is at the heart of our actions for deterrence, but also to protect our resources. However, as most nations in the world, we don't have everything that we require. That is why on an ongoing basis, we raise these issues with Parliament, with the committees and with Cabinet.

Chair, the SA National Defence Force is actively working towards an increased state of readiness of its vessels on a continuous basis. However, we continue to conduct patrols at the sea within the Republic's maritime domain. We also

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continue to ensure that the country's maritime interests and resources are protected within our territorial waters.

I can also share that out of the acquisition projects, the previous administration helped manage to acquire three vessels which continue to ensure the safety of our maritime environment. These vessels not only serve as deterrents but also respond to maritime threats. We also work with other departments in the country, like your Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, to make sure that we can synergise our energies.

We also work with other coastal neighbouring countries to make sure that we have a coherent seamless approach to all the threats that come to South Africa and the neighbouring countries. Thank you very much, Chair. [Applause.]

Dr K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA: Deputy Speaker, Minister ...

Sesotho:

... ka hlomphe fela, ke kopa o nhlalose tse mona:

English:

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Why are we continuing with the doctrine of a big army and a small navy when our economic zone has got more water - which means we are more water than land? Before 1994, it made sense, because they were fighting a war in Namibia, in southern Angola and internally. Now we need a bigger navy than a bigger army because that economic exclusive zone carries 80% of our GDP.

Sesotho:

Ke kopa o nhlalositse moo fela. Ke a leboha Motlatsa Spikara.
[Mahofi.]

TONA YA TSHIRELETSO LE MAKGABANE A SESOLE: Ere ke lebohe potso, ke boele ke hlalose ka tsela eo ke utlwisisang ka yona tsietsi e teng. Re a dumela hore ho a hlokahala hore ho be le dikepe tse lekaneng hore re tsamae metsing; empa metsing ha o tsamae ka hara metsi, o tsamaya fela ka dikepe.

Ho bolelang hore mosebetsi wa teng o batla disebediswa tse ngata ho feta batho. Athe masole a tsamayang fatshe ona, jwaloka a tshwanetseng ho romelwa Kapa Bophirima, a ka se tsamae ka dikepe kapa ka dikoli. Ba tshwanetse ba ye bathong ka mmele le ka nama. Seo ke se hlalosang ke hore re ntse re

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tswela pele re tiisa bokgoni ba rona, hore re kgone ho tsamaya metsing re sireletse naha.

Ke dumellana le wena ha o re boholo kapa bophara ba lebopo la lewatile la rona, bo a hloka hore re be le matla a tsitsitseng. Empa ha o tsebe ho ka bapisa bokgoni ba ho sebedisa sesole sa fatshe le bokgoni ba sesole sa metsing, hobane le bona ba sebetsang metsing e ntse e le masole hobane ba qala ba kwetliswe jwaloka masole, e be e le hona ba romelwang metsing. Jwale, ha ho na ntho e fapaneng haholo, ho hlakahala hore re fumane dikepe tse ngata ho feta tseo re nang le tsona hona jwale. [Mahofi.]

English:

Mr M D LEGOETE: Madam Deputy Speaker, as a follow-up, I would like to ask the Minister what progress has been made to bolster the South African Navy's ability to effectively patrol and secure the maritime domain by pushing back against piracy, illegal fishing, trafficking, as well as to ensure that we can say with confidence that our sovereignty is properly secured. Thank you.

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The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon Minister, before you reply, I just want to make sure I had on my list action essay to ask the follow-up. And it says Ms hon Ngubeni. Hon Trollip!

Mr R A P TROLLIP: No, hon Deputy Speaker, it says me and it is on the parliamentary list. I informed Parliament. Yes, we did. Here is the list. However, thank you very much for the opportunity. According to 2024-2025 annual report, The Navy cannot provide required capabilities due to unavailability of vessels: 47% of sea hours achieved against target; 33,2% maritime training and compliance; long-range patrols of vast coastline have been cancelled due to unserviceable craft; two marines out of submarines out of service, one under extended maintenance, one in four frigates available.

Only the SAS Amatola is occasionally operational. The others are in dry dock. I am not sure what visuals you are talking about that are available. Under these circumstances, Minister, how are we securing our maritime sovereignty; how are we protecting our maritime and marine resources from exploitation by illicit fishing in our exclusive economic zone; and how are we preventing infiltration of drug trafficking through our maritime border?

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The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, with respect, I won't answer the first part, because these are statistics that the member got from the department. So, it is not anything new that we don't know about what the challenges are. However, the point I am making is that, in spite of the challenges that we have made public, we are doing all we can.

It is not only Amatola, but I am also saying the last administration got three vessels to make sure that we patrol. We are saying to enhance and strengthen our hands in the context of these challenges is to work with other sister departments to reinforce the work that we do, but also work with other coastal countries, like Mozambique and Angola, to make sure that there is a seamless protection.

So, the fact of the matter is, yes - and I have admitted in the first part of the question - we need to do more as a country. We need to get more vessels. Perhaps it is because I was speaking in Sesotho: We need to get more vessels to strengthen our hands. We are not denying that there are challenges, but we are also saying we are not going to throw our hands in the air and say there is nothing we can do

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because we don't have adequate resources. We are doing all we can within the resources that we have.

So, it is not only Amatola. I am saying from the previous administration, we inherited three ships that are helping us to patrol the border. So, we are doing work. We could do more, but we are doing what we have to do to protect our coastline and also protect our maritime wealth. Thank you, Chair.

[Applause.]

Mr S H M VAN WYK: House Chair, hon Minister, is there any intelligence indicating that criminal elements within the SA Navy are colluding with illegal fishing operations, drug cartels or human traffickers; and if so, what oversight, investigative and accountability mechanisms are currently in place to detect, prevent and decisively address such conduct? Thank you very much.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, I am not going to deny it. From where I sit, I have no report which says members of the defence force in the navy are working with criminals. I am not going to deny it, but I don't know about it because I don't have such a report. However, what I can say

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is that every section of the department works with our defence intelligence to provide all the information we require.

We may not publicise it openly, but the fact of the matter is that our defence intelligence, working with other intelligence agencies in the country, collect information on an ongoing basis. However, if members have more information which we don't have, we will submit it to the relevant intelligence bodies, verify it and act on it. Therefore, I can't say what actions we have taken, because I don't have such a report.

If it is possible that there is such information, and perhaps the member can share with us the information that he has about SA National Defence Force members or naval members working with criminals, then we will definitely have to act in order to protect our country. Thank you very much, Chair.

[Applause.]

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU: Deputy Speaker, hon Minister, in view of the cross-border nature of piracy, trafficking and illegal fishing, what concrete steps has, or will, the Minister take to strengthen co-operation within the Southern African Development Community, SADC, to ensure co-ordinated patrols,

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intelligence sharing and joint maritime enforcement? Thank you.

IsiZulu:

UNGQONGQOSHE WEZOKUVIKELA NEZIGAGAYI ZEMPI: Ngiyabonga, Baba uCebekhulu.

English:

As I indicated, Chair, I said as part of our strategy - and not only of SA National Defence Force - is to work with our neighbours, because to have a seamless system, we need to work with Mozambique up to as far as Tanzania and all the coastal countries. That is why we have an ongoing relationship with them, to make sure that we can work in synergy with coastal countries to our left and to our right.

We also work well with Namibia. We work with Angola to make sure, again, that there's a seamless process to make sure that we can protect our naval interests as both countries. So, we have ongoing working relationships, we have agreements and there are ongoing meetings and sharing of information between those countries to exactly ensure that ...

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IsiZulu:

... ngempela ...

English:

... we can protect the whole SADC coastal line, even beyond SADC, because as I say, up to as far as Tanzania, to make sure that we share information. Thank you very much, Chair.

Sesotho:

Ngaka K LITCHFIELD-TSHABALALA: Ke a leboha hape Motlatsa Spikara. Letona, a ke re e bue taba ena, re e bue Sesotho:

English:

Currently, the way our doctrine stands is that the navy is the smallest arm of service. How do you have a navy as the smallest arm of service when we have a coastline of 3 000 kilometres - an economic zone of 1 800 square kilometres ...

Sesotho:

Ke kopa o dumele fela hore ...

English:

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... in this 21st century, this defence doctrine needs a revision. We cannot be able not to protect a coastline or an area that carries 80% of our GDP, but our priorities are fighting poverty: Number one, how much poaching goes on there? That is fish that people could be eating internally.

Sesotho:

Jwale, ke kopa re dumellane fela hore ...

English:

... this needs a revision. It cannot go on like this. We are continuing with a pre-apartheid defence doctrine. [Applause.]

Sesotho:

TONA YA TSHIRELETSO LE MAKGABANE A SESOLE: Nneteng, ke a dumela hore ha re tlo dumellana ka ntho eo re sa dumellaneng ka yona. Ha ke dumellane le wena. Ke pono hao; ha e be ya hao! Ho salang ke hore mosebetsi wa ho sireletsa lebopo la lewatile ...

IsiZulu:

Noma ufuna ngikhulume ngesiZulu? Ngibona ukhombakhomba, ngizokhuluma ngesiZulu. Kodwake ...

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Sesotho:

Ke re mosebetsi wa ho sireletsa lebopo la lewatile ha o tshwane le mosebetsi wa naheng. O se ke wa tlo bapisa ntho tse sa tshwaneng. Moo ke dumellanang le wena teng, ke hore re tshwanetse ho tiisa bokgoni ba rona. Lebopo la lewatile le lebelwa ka dikepe, e seng ka batho. Hore o tla hira setjhaba lebopong la lewatile, ebe ba tla matha lebopo la lewatile ba sebedise dipalangwa, ha e sebetse jwalo.

E sebetsa ka thekenoloji; ho bolelang hore ha o hloke batho ba bangata. Ho ya ka mofuta wa mosebetsi. [Mahofi.] [Kena hanong.] Jwale, wena ha o re ho fetohle, ke tsa hao; ha ke dumellane le wena. O se ke wa re re a dumellana; ha re dumellane!

English:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, hon Minister. Hon Trollip, what is your point of order?

IsiZulu:

ILUNGU ELIHLONIPHEKILE: Malibongwe!

English:

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Mr R A P TROLLIP: Deputy Speaker, there is no translation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was indeed also struggling. We have sent a message that there is no translation, that they have to send someone.

Mr R A P TROLLIP: You might have sent them a message, but we didn't have the benefit of listening to the response.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will, in that case, ask the Minister if she could please repeat her reply.

Mr R A P TROLLIP: Thank you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr S NOMVALO: No, this one was only good in vernacular language.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, hon member, what is your point of order?

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Mr M G MAHLAULE: Hon Deputy Speaker, the question was asked in vernacular language. So, let's start from the question so that, in terms of the benefit that hon Trollip is looking for, we know what the Minister is saying in English, if it needs be; not the Minister responding in English to a question that she has not heard.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon member, the question was in fact interpreted into English. It is only the Minister's reply that was not interpreted. So, please, Minister, if you could repeat your reply.

Mr S NOMVALO: I will send it in writing.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: In my response to the question, I was asked to admit that the doctrine is incorrect, and I am saying the basis thereof is not valid. You can't compare maritime capacity to all your land work capacity, because the way the assignments are performed, it requires different capacities.

Where I agree with the member is that indeed we need to continue to strengthen our maritime capacity but not

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necessarily compare it to our land work capacity. That is what I am saying. So, those things are unrelated, and therefore there is no need to motivate for capacitating the navy at the expense of the army. That is what I was saying. I am saying that I am not agreeing with you on some parts; I am agreeing with you on other parts. [Applause.]

Question 6:

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Hon Deputy Speaker, I need to indicate that South Africa's tenure at the African Union, AU, Peace and Security Council will be guided by the centrality of Africa as a continent and also our South Africa's foreign policy.

This approach will continue to emphasise the alignment of South Africa's national interests with the continental priorities since 1994.

I also need to indicate that South Africa has adopted a foreign policy that advocates for Africa's renewal and integration.

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Central to this, is Africa's vision 2030, where we need to silence the guns and make it a point that we build a peaceful and prosperous Africa that we so much love, all of us.

Central to our priority areas, as we continue with our tenure in the AU Peace and Security Council, will be the whole issue where we need to reset the AU Peace and Security rule-based engagements and also the issue of having to have the AU Peace and Security Council as a premier organ of the AU responsibility towards issues of peace and security in the continent.

We also need to work towards institutionalising the early warning mechanism within the AU Peace and Security Council because in more than instances that we have experienced, conflict continues to recur under our watch and we don't have an institutionalised mechanism to detect early warning mechanism within those areas that are conflicted.

We are also going to be advocating for expeditious and consistent and predictable implementation of all our AU Peace and Security Council decisions, because in most instances we

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take decisions that are not followed up and that are not even implemented.

We are also going to bring onto the AU Peace and Security our expertise where we have built a peace and security in Mozambique. We have also assisted in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC, through our troop contribution mechanism within the Southern African Development Community, SADC, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, SAMIDRC.

We will also bring our experience in matters where we focus on peaceful resolution to conflict through mediation because it is not only through a barrel of a gun that we can resolve conflict, we can resolve conflict even through mediation efforts that we have always been doing in Burundi, in Mozambique and also in other parts of the continent. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Ms A N KUMBACA: Hon Deputy Minister, what specific mechanisms, initiatives or working groups will South Africa champion or co-lead within the Peace and Security Council to accelerate the implementation of existing peace agreements such as those in the eastern DRC, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and the Sahel,

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including targeted support for AU-led mediation, post-conflict reconstruction and the silencing of the guns initiative? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Hon Deputy Speaker, South Africa is the Chair of the AU High Level Ad-Hoc Committee for South Sudan, which is the C5. This High Level Ad-Hoc Committee had a session now along the sideline of the AU Summit that was recently held in Ethiopia and we are now pleased to indicate that we participated in the C5 on matters of Sudan, together with Algeria and Nigeria, who always form part of the C5.

I think we need to indicate as well that we need to advocate for more resolution to conflicts through mediation efforts because the President of the Republic of South Africa has also had a special envoy from South Sudan that came and met with him. And what was discussed within those engagements was how do we support South Sudan to go back to its constitutional democracy? And I'm pleased to indicate that today, as we speak, South Sudan is preparing to hold its democratic elections this year, December, and I need to indicate that they will always be given the necessary support with a special

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envoy as well, that is led by the Deputy President on behalf of the President of the Republic of South Africa to South Sudan to suit it that we work together at a bilateral level and at a diplomatic level to assist South Sudan to go back to its democratic values and principles. Thank you very much.
[Applause.]

Mr R SMITH: Deputy Minister, I'm very glad to hear that you've mentioned returning South Sudan back to a functional democracy, because Africa's security can only be guaranteed when we address the backslide of democracy and the dangerous rise of dictatorial regimes in our region.

Instead of condemning countries like Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe for their sham elections and human rights atrocities in recent months, Department of International Relations and Co-operation, Dirco, and the Presidency send them well wishes and invited them to South Africa as guests of honour.

How does the Minister intend to address peace and security concerns on the continent through the AU Peace and Security Council when it remains silent on violent dictatorships and

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authoritarian regimes which are on the rise in Africa and prevalent right here on our doorstep? [Applause.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Hon Deputy Speaker, I think at the centre of my response would be the fact that as a sovereign nation of South Africa we also need to respect the sovereignty of other nations, whether it's Mozambique, whether it's Burundi, whether it's South Sudan, we need to always respect the sovereignty of other nations so that the respect can also be reciprocal. [Applause.]

I don't think hon member is suggesting that tomorrow we must wake up to this narrative that says South Africa is not a democratic country, coming from our neighbouring nations.

So, we need to work together within SADC to make it a point that within the SADC Peace and Security Council we can address all the domestic issues within the SADC region and see to it that we bring about peace and stability in the region where we reside in, which is SADC. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

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Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Deputy Minister, this is not the first time South Africa is elected into the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In 2016 during the 20th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council we were elected into this body.

What would you say have been the achievements of South Africa having served on this body for several times and what will make our participation in this term different from previous terms, in terms of achieving the priorities that you have just mentioned? Thank you. [Applause.]

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Hon member, thank you very much for that question. From where we are standing as South Africa, we are bringing with us a particular experience in terms of issues of peaceful resolution to conflict and issues of resolving conflict through mediation efforts.

I am indicating here, member, that you pay attention to the work that we have done as South Africa within SADC and beyond. The experiences that we are having as South Africa on these measures are the ones that have given us this confidence that we have seen within the broader AU Commission to have given us

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this opportunity to be part and parcel of the AU Peace and Security Council.

We have worked together in Burundi to bring about peace. Today, as we speak, hon member, Burundi is stable and it is brought back to its democratic values. [Applause.]

We have also intervened in Mozambique where those conflicts were trying to raise their ugly heads. Today, as we speak, Mozambique is stable and secured because of the efforts of the people of South Africa under the government of President Cyril Ramaphosa. [Applause.]

So, we do have this expertise that we have as South Africa and that is the reason why we were re-elected into the AU Peace and Security again by other member states of the AU. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Dr M A MAIMANE: Deputy Minister, thank you very much and I want to welcome what the Deputy Minister is saying about the interventions they've had.

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Deputy Minister, I want to introduce you to the African Democratic Alliance on Freedom and Progress, an association of opposition parties in the continent seeking to really maintain democracy.

And I want to say to you, I support the view of silencing the guns. But I think you and I would agree on one common fact. You cannot build democracy without democrats. And there seems to be this growing tendency in the continent where people get elected and mid-term start to adjust their terms so that they can stay longer.

My question to you, therefore, Deputy Minister, because the same thing happened in Guinea and it ended up in violence, which undermines your efforts. The same thing is taking place in Zimbabwe right now where the President is seeking to extend his term.

Do you support the extension of that term or will you condemn it on behalf of the people of Zimbabwe as you've intervened in other places? I thank you very much.

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The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Hon member, I think you are asking for an arm and a leg from us as the people of South Africa. When it comes to the sovereignty of other nations, we need to always respect other member states' sovereignty. [Applause.] Because I don't expect you to be suggesting that we need to then forget about our issues of national interest and start focusing on what is happening in Zimbabwe.

I believe that Zimbabwean citizens themselves are going to chart a way forward on how they want to see their country being led going forward, without us necessarily interfering within their domestic issues.

So, we'll utilise our SADC interim Chairmanship to make it a point that the constitutional values and principles that have been guiding our foreign policy as a country are not being compromised. And I think we sit together with our other SADC member states including Zimbabwe and all others that are within the Southern African Development Community that we will make it a point that within the SADC region we'll advocate for issues of the respect for the human rights issues, the respect

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for the issues of the rule of law and the respect for the constitutional democracy.

So, with regard to Zimbabwe, the Zimbabweans are at liberty to chart their way forward without us interfering. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Ms A N KUMBACA: Hon Deputy Minister, how will South Africa support operational effectiveness and accountability within the AU Peace Support missions? Thank you.

The DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CO-OPERATION (Ms A T Moraka): Hon House Chair, I need to indicate that South Africa is also a member of AU High Level Ad-Hoc Committee for Libya and has actively supported the Chair where the Republic of Congo has been chairing that organ and in its mandate we need to foster a Libyan-led inclusive political process to achieve a lasting peace and security that can always be in line with their national interests.

South Africa will also take over as a Chair of the Regional Oversight Mechanism on Peace, Security and Co-operation Framework of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great

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Lakes region of which the AU is a co-guarantor in that particular regard.

I also need to indicate that South Africa will also utilise this opportunity to advance the objectives of the AU Peace and Security Framework at the Council through promoting political dialogues towards ongoing conflicts that continue to happen in other parts of the continent. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Question 78:

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon House Chair, I need to indicate that the State Security Agency, SSA, has never and still do not operate any slush fund. The funding and expenditure of the SSA is within the legislated framework that is regulated and administered by the National Treasury. The SSA's funding is fully disclosed in the financial statements that are audited by the Auditor-General of South Africa and they are included in the annual report that is submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence that performs oversight of the SSA on behalf of this Parliament. Thank you, hon House Chair.

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Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Yes, I'm taking the question. No, Minister, that is not true. I remember the history of this House. We've been asking this question of a slush fund. Who is managing it from the presidency? At all times, every evidence that comes to the Madlanga Commission and even the commissions before, a slush fund is utilised in a manner in which it's either for factions of the ANC or it's for corruption and bribing of every other entity and officials of entities, even with Eskom, Transnet and the Zondo Commission, the slush fund was the subject of that commission.

Who is managing the slush fund? Why when they come to Parliament they say, they cannot disclose that expenditure simply because of security reasons? So, this which you are referring to is not the same thing that we are asking for. We are looking for the money that you utilise in secret. Where is it?

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: I think we need to separate the SSA from the SA Police Service Crime Intelligence Division. The SSA is not a SA Police Service Crime Intelligence, which is commonly known as SAPSCI, does not report under the SSA. The SSA has never operated a slush fund.

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Our funding is controlled under the National Treasury and is reported for.

In terms of disclosure of information and in terms of financial expenditures, we cannot disclose the information, whether it is SAPSCI, it's Defence Intelligence, or SSA in the House like this. That is why Parliament has appointed a Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence where those reports are submitted so that there is no compromise on operations that will then compromise the national security of the Republic. Thank you, hon House Chair.

The DEPUTY CHIEF WHIP OF THE SECOND LARGEST MINORITY PARTY:
Hon Minister, thanks for your response that the State Security Agency operates within an established legislation and oversight framework, including regulation by the National Treasury and also audited by the Auditor-General of South Africa and parliamentary oversight through the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence.

Hon Minister, is the Minister satisfied that the current oversight and control mechanism are sufficient to prevent abuse of funds within the intelligence environment?

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The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: The first response to the matter is that, continuously when new threats emerges and abuses emerges, you can never say you are satisfied. There's always more work that needs to be done. However, on the regulatory framework that is currently in place, the information as we have said, is available to the Auditor-General of South Africa.

Nevertheless, when the Auditor-General does not have access to that information, that information is provided to the ...

[Inaudible.] ... form or the other. The secret service funds are governed by the Secret Service Act. What we'll need to do is working on the mechanisms and proposals so that it's not dependent on the management that is in place or a Minister that is in place to comply, like the current arrangement, which is only determined through policy.

We want to work a formulation that will engage with the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence on the possibility of bringing into line the Secret Service funds to make reference to the Public Finance Management Act, PFMA, directly and all the other applicable legislation so that we future-proof the

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arrangements that are in place that they cannot be overridden by an executive authority. Thank you, hon House Chair.

Mr W M THRING: Minister, for years the misuse of COVID-19 funds, now termed slush funds, has been a source of factionalism, corruption and abuse of power within Crime Intelligence and the broader State Security Agency. The ACDF has proposed a regulatory regime grounded in transparency to Parliament, where all COVID-19 accounts must be subject to confidential reporting to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence, including an independent audit by the Auditor-General empowered to audit all COVID-19 funds under secure protocols and ensure criminal sanctions for officials who divert funds for personal or political gain.

Minister, will you install and enhance these safeguards? And if yes, by when? If not, why not? And what alternative mechanisms would you propose to ensure accountability? Thank you.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: As I've indicated earlier, the SSA operates within a regulated framework fully audited by the Auditor-General of South Africa. The information that the

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Auditor-General of South Africa does not have access to, is information on agents. However, the agents' information, there is oversight provided for by the Inspector-General of Intelligence.

The report both of the Auditor-General and the inspector general as it relates to the financial status and financial management and the agents' handling mechanism and operations by the SSA are submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence. The proposal we are reviewing, because as part of the General Intelligence Laws Amendment Act, GILAA, we are putting more stronger regulations, but the regulations that we are putting relates only to SSA.

That is why, we are contemplating through the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee, NICOC, arrangement a discussion of how do we bring to board the same arrangements that apply for SSA to the SAPSCI and to the defence intelligence. However, as for now, I am responsible for SSA that operates within a regulated framework. There are no slush funds that are not overseen. Thank you very much.

Xitsonga:

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Mr S M GANA: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu. Holobye, ndza mi twa kambe a ndzi mi twisisi kahle.

English:

So, this regulatory framework existed around 2016-17 that also led to the President appointing the high-level review that was led by Dr Mufamadi. So, we know that that regulatory framework was found to be defective. What I want to know is: Whether the fights that we see happening in the police, are they happening in the State Security Agency?

Will we not one day, in the not so distant future, have to appoint another high-level review panel to look at the work of the State Security Agency in the last 32 years? That's what I want to know. The issues of the slush funds, we know what they get used for in that agency. Thank you.

Xitsonga:

HOLOBYE EHOFISINI YA PRESIDENTE: Ndza khensa, Mutshamaxitulu. Makwerhu Muchaviseki, a ndzi koti ku twisisa leswaku hikokwalaho ka yini u nga swi twisisi leswaku ku na ...

English:

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... difference between the SA Police Service Crime Intelligence, the SSA and the Defence Intelligence. We co-ordinate at the NICOC level the national intelligence structures. However, as it comes to the regulation, even if you go back to the high-level review panel and the issues that were raised, the issues that were raised was access of the Auditor-General in auditing the financial statements of the SSA. That matter has been addressed.

As part of the GILAA, GILAA says, part of the things that the new services and the agencies, when they come into effect, there must be regulations to deal with those issues. So, on our part, we are working on the regulations which will deal with the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence. However, on the part of the other national intelligence structures who do not have the same regulatory framework on their COVID funding as SSA, that we are contemplating a discussion and a proposal through the NICOC structure, which will engage with the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence of what is the best mechanism for everyone.

Nevertheless, on our view we say, we want to bring the secret service fund into line with what the PFMA, not only what the

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PFMA provides, but what the other regulations provide. Why we want to do that? Is that we do not want another Minister, another management team to override the current arrangements that we have put in place in response to the high-level review panel so that there is no regress that become systematised. Even regulations, they can be altered by the executive authority in consultation with the joint standing committee.

That is why we are saying, will that be enough or should we go. So, in the meantime, because for legislation it will take us two years, we are working on the regulations, but we'll have an engagement with the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence who are responsible for the oversight, who receive our reports on the how do we bring up to date the Secret Service Fund and how do we get it to apply to other national intelligence ... [Time expired.] ...

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: Minister, do not take a defensive approach because what you are answering is in the full operations of the SSA, and of course, they are governed by the legislation. We are asking about the secret service account. You have come very close when you were answering the hon Deputy Chief Whip.

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It has a very limited transparency and we can't get into the day-to-day operations. Who is operating in that account? Who is giving instructions based on what? I'll give you an example. When in Giyani it was burning, we were told, I think it was hon Mahlobo at the time, he said, they can never disclose what the secret account is doing.

We want to get into that space, even if it means you have to vet the officials from Parliament, the Inspector-General of Intelligence, IGI, as well as the Auditor-General of South Africa, AGSA. However, someone has to be making sure that you do account for that secret service account.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: As I've indicated, the secret service account is fully audited by the Auditor-General of South Africa. On information that has to deal with the agents, it is audited or oversighted by the IGI. Both the Auditor-General of South Africa and the IGI submit the relevant reports to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence. It is for that reason that the members of the Joint Committee on Intelligence who Parliament have assigned to oversee the State Security Agency, are vetted so that we could do the disclosures.

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It is for that reason that the questions that are provided to us, which we feel will compromise the national security, we provide to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence. Unless this House is saying they do not have confidence in the mechanism they set in place to oversee the SSA and the national intelligence structures. That discussion does not involve me. The House must come together and put a motion and say, how do we strengthen that mechanism? But the current mechanism is working.

What we have been assigned to do by the Joint Standing Committee of Intelligence on behalf of this House is to say, let's develop the regulations to make sure the arrangements that have been done to prevent the mismanagement to recur are regulated. The regulations of the state security agencies are not finalised by the Minister. They are done by the Minister in consultation with the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence to avoid Ministers having sway and overriding power. Thank you, hon House Chairperson.

Question 50:

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon Chair, in the effort to elevate the Restorative Justice programme, the

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department has created a structure to ensure that the Restorative Justice programme is at a directorate level. I must, however, say that due to budget constraints, it's not fully functional and the idea to put it on a directorate level is to ensure better evaluation and monitoring. That doesn't mean that the programmes are not active. It is at lower levels.

But we want to elevate it because restorative justice is a very important part in the rehabilitation of inmates. And the main issue here is that victims of crime now get the opportunity where there can be a victim-offender dialogue and it also enables victims to ensure that they have the right to attend parole boards when the specific offender's parole is heard or dealt with. So, it is very important and we understand and we realise that and we will keep on trying to see how we can get enough finance to ensure that this elevation will be successful. I thank you.

Ms B E MACHI: Thank you very much, hon House Chairperson, hon Minister, since restorative justice requires co-ordination with the SAPS, the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, traditional leaders and community organisations, what

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formalised partnerships or interdepartmental protocols will your department establish to improve referrals, streamline processes and ensure that restorative justice becomes a mandatory integrated component of rehabilitation? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon Chair and the hon member, restorative justice at this stage is at the Department of Correctional Services. I hear what the hon member says, that we must look at other role-players like the SA Police Service, NGOs, in certain programmes of restoration, and can I say when it comes to offenders, different NGOs are already part of those programmes. I can, for instance, give an example, we have Anger Management for offenders. We have New Beginning which involves gender-based violence. We also have a programme on sexual offences.

So, there are different programmes and there we get NGOs and other role-players that are part of that process to enhance the whole issue of restorative justice.

Mr J ENGELBRECHT: Minister, you mentioned the need to drive up awareness but given the primary barrier you identify is low participation from both offenders and victims as well as

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budgetary constraints. What specific structural or procedural changes will your department introduce? For example, making restorative justice a standard part of every sentencing pack or embedding facilitators within probation teams to ensure it becomes a default option in the criminal justice pathway rather than just an afterthought? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon Chair, as I've mentioned, we elevated the Restorative Justice Programme to a higher level of that of a directorate. And I also said that that will ensure better monitoring and evaluation. And yes, it is part of the Correctional Services Act and the White Paper on Corrections of 2005 dealing with restorative justice. And of course, if we want to ensure that it is a precondition, then we must look at the Act and to ensure that if certain amendments are needed, I would welcome it. You have one problem, and that is that we must remember when we have, for instance, victim-offender dialogues, it also depends on the victim whether he or she wants to participate in such a programme. It is not a matter of that the victim must participate. And that is part of our problem. You have offenders who are willing to participate, but the victims, for many reasons, for instance, especially when it comes to sexual

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offences, the victims are not always ready to participate. Furthermore, we're also looking to ensure that at least a social worker must be present with such a dialogue because it is a traumatic experience for the victims. So, we are looking into those matters to ensure that it becomes a very important part of the rehabilitation. Thank you.

IsiZulu:

Mnu E HENDRICKS: Othi ngibonge, Sihlalo, kuqala, kubahlali bale Ndlu, ...

English:

... Minister, considering the department's mandate to prioritise rehabilitation over mere incarceration, how will the Minister ensure accountability for this underperformance by initiating binding performance indicators, dedicated funding and transparent reporting mechanisms to transform restorative justice from a policy idea to a consistently delivering, outcome-driven programme? Thank you, ...

IsiZulu:

... Sihlalo

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English:

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon Chair, maybe I should just give perspective when we refer to an underperformance of 7%. Now, keep in mind, as I have said, that it also depends on the victim whether he or she wants to participate. In Quarter 3 of this financial year, the target set is 4 425 and 4 203 cases where there was participation from the victims and of course the offenders. The question of the hon member to say how we will prioritise and ensure that more funds are available. I must say that there are many issues to consider when we want to ensure that enough funds are available.

Everybody knows that the Department of Correctional Services is, when it comes to budgets, completely underfunded. So, you have to prioritise. Now it is not a matter that restorative justice does not take place. It takes place but then you have priorities for instance when it comes to security where you have no choice. You have to ensure certain aspects to be complied to and then you must use and utilise your finances to ensure that. I want to say again, of course, we will see that we can get more funds and be assured that we see it in the same serious light as the hon member. Thank you.

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Mr L G SHANGASE: Hon House Chair, hon Minister, how can the Department of Correctional Services balance the need of offenders' accountability with the goals of rehabilitation through restorative justice especially when the victims are hesitant to participate? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon Chair, well firstly let me say this, it is not a matter that if the victim does not want to participate that the whole concept of restorative justice is not dealt with. It is part of the programme. There is a specific programme when it comes to restorative justice where the offender go through that specific, can I say programme, to also prepare the offender that when he or she goes into a victim-offender dialogue that the offender is also prepared to know how to deal with it. So, it is not a matter that the offender then doesn't receive the correct rehabilitation in terms of the fact that the victim does not want to participate. So, the programme, in itself, is also then contributing to the rehabilitation of the offender. Thank you.

Ms B E MACHI: Thank you very much House Chairperson, hon Minister, given that the victims often decline participation

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due to fear, trauma or lack of psychological support, what measures will your department introduce beyond existing social worker interventions to guarantee victim safety, emotional support and informed consent throughout the restorative justice process? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: Hon Chair, as I've mentioned that we also want to see that specifically a social worker must be present. So, I'm honest, it doesn't always happen. That is true. There are specific procedures when it comes to that. But then there is also special training for officials who have to deal with this, can I say, dialogue. Therefore, we already advertised a couple of positions to get more social workers and even psychiatrists for the Department of Correctional Services. But again, we would like to have more. But again, and I don't want to use that as an excuse for everything, to say that we have budget constraints.

The fact of the matter is, if you don't have money, you don't have it. If you cannot pay a social worker or a psychologist, then you cannot get the person to deliver the service. So, I want to say and I emphasise again, we do our utmost best to ensure that we enhance this whole issue. And I say, it is very

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important, because we must understand one thing, that for me, the victim plays a very important role. And I said that when, for instance, even at the United Nations, when I addressed the General Assembly there last year, when it was about the Standard Minimum Rules, known as the Nelson Mandela Rules. I said yes, and that deals with dignity of the offenders. And I said there, but we must always ensure that there is justice as far as the victims are concerned. That is so important. We must recognise the importance of the victims. And yes, it's not a matter of the victim ... We will continue with that process. Thank you. [Time expired.]

Question 10:

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Chair, digital transformation of departmental processes is indeed the apex priority, as we deliver on the vision of Home Affairs @ Home. The three flagship reforms under this strategy are:

Firstly, to massively expand inclusion and access to physical documents through the new digital partnership model with the banking sector;

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Secondly, the full digitalisation of the visa system through the Electronic Travel Authorisation, ETA; and

Thirdly, the roll out of digital identity to provide biometrically secure digital and mobile access to enabling documents.

In support of these three flagship reforms, we are also focused on modernising core systems, including the creation of an Intelligent Population Register as the backbone for digital ID, enhanced cybersecurity measures and stronger data governance and use of analytics.

As it relates to the question on progress, over the past 20 months, significant progress has been registered in implementing this strategy. Completed and implemented milestones include, amongst others, the strategy itself being formally approved and budget allocated for phased implementation; governance structures established to oversee the digital transformation delivery; phase one of the ETA system completed; phase one of the bank expansion programme is on track for public launch very shortly; implementation of a fully automated citizenship reinstatement portal; enablement

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of ID smart card issuance for naturalised citizens and permanent residents. The first phase of that is done; automation of phase one of selected back office processes, which has led to a meaningful reduction in turnaround times; digitalisation of corporate support services, including e-leave and e-submission processes; and significant upgrades to the online verification service to become a formal digital offering.

As announced during the Sona debate, the priorities for this year are to roll out digital ID smart card and passport services in hundreds of bank branches across the country, to scale up the ETA to more ports of entry and visa categories, and to introduce digital ID. Thank you.

Ms S P JAMA: Hon Minister, given that the digital ID systems involve the storage of highly sensitive biometric and identity data, which if not properly safeguarded could present risk of identity fraud, national security concerns and challenges to the sovereignty of state health identity data, where will citizens' biometric and identity data be stored? Who will have the custodianship of that data and what policies exist

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regarding the retention or deletion of such data, including after a citizen is deceased?

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, I think we always have to start with what is the situation in terms of the status quo. It's not like identity fraud doesn't happen today with paper-based processes ... with manual processes. We've just seen the *Special Investigating Unit*, SIU, report, and we can see the significant risks to the integrity of our systems wherever we use manual and paper-based systems, and that is also why the SIU has very clearly recommended that we have to move away from these kinds of processes and digitally transform our work.

The good news, as it relates to digitalising these systems, is that the building blocks are in place. South Africa already has a population register where all of this information has been managed for many years. The key question is how do we upgrade it, how do we make systems interoperable so that we can provide better and more efficient services.

However, we don't have to reinvent the wheel. The biometric capabilities that the hon member refers to are already in

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place. We have to simply work more ambitiously and more aggressively to close all the loopholes where manual processes have provided access to the manipulation of our systems.

Finally, however, I think the role of cybersecurity is integral and foundational to everything that we are talking about. It's not an afterthought. It's been part of the design thinking from day one on all of these particular systems.

So, we have a lot of the building blocks in place. It's a matter of tightening up and really being more ambitious in using them to deliver services more effectively and more securely. Thank you.

Mr A C ROOS: Minister, in light of the improved turnaround times and dramatically increased ID smart card output of your digitisation strategy, what concrete steps are you taking to ensure that poor and rural South Africans, who historically face the greatest barriers to accessing Home Affairs' services, are able to benefit from these gains?

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Chairperson, yes, I think if you look at the fact that for the first time Home Affairs was

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able to issue over four million ID smart cards in 2025, which is a dramatic increase from around 2,7 million where the average used to sit, I think we can see the fruits of greater access and improvements to these systems starting to be visible and tasted by more South Africans.

We have seen an improvement of over 60% in terms of the turnaround time for some of these processes and that's part of why we've managed to increase output.

However, we are certainly not stopping there and our motivation is to massively expand inclusion and access to Home Affairs' services by using technology in smarter ways.

Home Affairs, for example, has 349 physical permanent offices. A total of 101 of them are still not modernised. You can only get a green ID there. You can't get an ID smart card there.

That is why we are investing in really transforming the partnership with the banking sector, that has been there for many years, into a digital-first model so that we can have hundreds of bank branches across the length and breadth of the country offering access to these services. That is going to be a massive step forward for the inclusion of rural and

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underserved communities, because it's usually people in rural areas that have to travel great distances just to reach their nearest Home Affairs office. Now they're going to have bank branches around the corner from them where they already transact, where their salaries are deposited, where social grants are deposited, and now they're going to have access to these world-class services right around the corner from them.

We are really at the precipice of launching this on a very big scale and I think South Africans across the country are going to soon experience the benefits of our focus on digital transformation. Thank you.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Chair, with the implementation of the information and communications technology, ICT, strategy, can the Minister explain in detail if part of the strategy involves what is called the modernised offices of Home Affairs? If true, there have been complaints in many Home Affairs offices concerning those modernised offices with regard to persistent downtime of at least, approximately, eight hours a day in some Eastern Cape, Limpopo and other provincial offices.

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What is the Minister going to do to ensure that while implementing this ICT strategy he doesn't introduce another new form of failure in Home Affairs in managing, using and implementing technology solutions efficiently? One example is an online visa application system that has zero controls, zero verification of duplicate payments and zero curbing of cybercrime, no security of online files like PDFs and many more other failures of the Department of Home Affairs' technology introduction.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, let me start with the second example or part of the question. The e-visa system is going to be replaced by the ETA. It does not work. It has provided a digital front end for a manual process, and that's exactly where those issues come in. So, that's going to be mothballed and replaced by the ETA as the single entry point for all visa applications into South Africa, starting with tourist visas but expanded over time.

The ETA is a completely different animal, compared to anything we've seen before. It uses advanced machine learning technology to verify whether a passport is authentic. It uses biometric technology to ensure that the face of the applicant

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matches the face in the passport and again verifies the facial identity of the traveller when they arrive in South Africa. So, we are dealing with that in a systematic and comprehensive way.

On the issue of offices, as I mentioned there are 101 Home Affairs offices that even today in 2026 are not modernised. That is a function of resource constraints.

If we are going to wait for the money to appear in order to modernise all those offices, well we've already waited many years since 2013 when the ID smart card was introduced, and it's still not sufficient.

So, we have to think differently. We have to use technology and we have to use partnerships to make up for resource shortfalls. That is exactly what we are doing through the banks, and as I say, we will shortly be announcing a very exciting rollout of this project and then South Africans will see for themselves, and as the saying goes, they will vote with their feet as they gain access to these services in places and with a level of reliability they've never seen before. Thank you.

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Mr T P MOGALE: Hon Minister, our people are forced to travel long distances to access Home Affairs services, and each time they go there they find the Home Affairs system is constantly offline and they are forced to go back home without being properly serviced, having spent a lot of money to try to access Home Affairs services.

Since assuming your new responsibilities as the Minister of Home Affairs, how many hours have been lost due to system downtime at the various Home Affairs offices and which Home Affairs offices are the hardest hit when it comes to the system being offline? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Hon Chair, I think it's important to correct the statement that these things are constantly offline. We would never have produced four million ID smart cards if everything was constantly broken. It's not correct.

The numbers that the hon member refers to are that we've reduced the turnaround time on ID smart cards and passports by over 60% and in the final quarter of 2025 we saw about

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20% reduction in system offline issues at Home Affairs offices.

The key point though which the hon member raises is the issue of travelling distance, and that is exactly what we are addressing on a massive scale this year.

The fundamental problem is that geographically South Africa is within the top 30 largest countries in the world. We have 62 million people and we have only 349 permanent Home Affairs offices. It's not enough and we will not have enough coverage. We will not be able to expand that because we don't have the financial resources to do that.

So, that is why we are leveraging on existing integration with the financial sector. They already use integration with Home Affairs to verify the identity of clients in the banking sector, for example, and we are using that now to piggyback on access to services on top of that existing integration. So absolutely, as the hon Mogale correctly says, that is one of the biggest issues we are addressing this year.

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No longer will you have to travel an enormous distance, especially if you live in a rural area, just to even get to the front door of Home Affairs. You will now find it in the bank branch around the corner from you. We are starting with dozens of those offices in a very, very short space of time from now and we are going to be ramping that up to bring these services to hundreds of new locations all across the country. Thank you.

Ms S P JAMA: Hon Minister, I must say you have left me more concerned about the security of our identity data with the generic nature of the answers that you have given.

... [Inaudible.] ... in light of the fact that the department currently does not have a deputy director-general responsible for information technology, how has the department been driving its digital strategy? What has been the extent of its reliance on private contractors in implementing these initiatives, particularly where functions may ordinarily constitute core state functions, and what has been the total expenditure to date on such private service providers, including whether this expenditure has been accommodated within the budget for the current financial year? Thank you.

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The MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS: Chair, I think the latter part of the question should be submitted as a written question and we can get the figures to the hon member.

However, as I said, these are service providers that have been there for many, many years, and what is quite amazing is to see how the money that was spent on service providers was not used to maximum effect. We have for far too long allowed people to get money through these contracts without forcing them to deliver properly.

So, our focus on contract management, on ensuring that we get maximum value out of these providers, that in many cases have been there for years, is really one of the keys to the progress that we are seeing.

I think in terms of the other part of the question, the reality is that all of this is owned by the government. We are in fact making all of this progress possible. Contrary to what the hon member says, we have someone from the *Council for Scientific and Industrial Research*, CSIR, who is actually working in that particular role and who has made significant contributions to exactly this progress that we are seeing.

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So, at the end of the day, I think it's actions that speak louder than words. As I say, I think within the next few weeks we are very excited about the actions that the people of South Africa will see coming from Home Affairs, making their life better, giving them better access to services.

And here's the kicker of it all. No longer are you going to stand in these massive queues, waiting for this process to roll out. The new model we are introducing through the banks ... three minutes to apply for an ID smart card. Thank you.

Question 56:

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon House Chairperson and thank you hon member Meshoe for the question. I'll take the second part of the question first. As I reported publicly on the instructions of the President, I think about two weeks ago, that after receiving the interim report of the Madlanga Commission, that action should be taken against 14 individuals against whom there was *prima facie* evidence. We established an investigations task team, which is prosecution-led. I can confirm that, that has happened.

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I can also confirm that disciplinary steps have been taken against all the affected individuals by implementing precautionary suspensions. I'm referring both to the SA Police Service, SAPS officials and the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Police Department, EMPD officials. I can also confirm that the Independent Police Investigative Directorate, Ipid is also conducting certain investigations on the recommendations of the Madlanga Commission, and I'm expecting progress because I have received a report.

With respect to part one, members should recall that the President announced during the Sona that vetting and lifestyle audits will be implemented by the State Security Agency. I think it's going to be critical that we focus on high-risk areas like procurement and crime intelligence. I will certainly be monitoring progress in this regard. Secondly, additional resources have been allocated to the anticorruption units. The National Commissioner made announcements with regard to this some time ago.

Thirdly, the President announced that the recommendations of the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council, which I chair, he endorses those recommendations. I can confirm that they

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will now be considered in the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security, JCPS cluster under the leadership of the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development.

I can also indicate that we are looking at the disciplinary provisions of the SAPS and the way discipline is handled, because I think there's some changes need to be made. The National Commissioner and I are now in agreement that those internal disciplinary processes should be presided over by an external expert as part of the professionalisation agenda. On legislative amendments, the SA Police Service Amendment Bill is being finalised, and that will be before Parliament in due course.

Let me speak to the issue of crime intelligence, because that was an important issue that question about slush funds that should perhaps have been directed to myself, not the Minister responsible for state security. I think it's correct to indicate that there is a gap there that needs to be addressed. There have been many reports of the misuse of those funds. So, we need to look at the regulatory process.

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The Auditor-General routinely issues qualified audits because the Auditor-General is not able to examine those accounts fully. I think that the Minister responsible for state security's reply, perhaps is an interesting one, that the model that's being applied in the Defence sector could also be examined and perhaps applied to crime intelligence when it comes to SAPS. Thank you.

Rev K R J MESHOE: House Chair and thank you hon Minister for those answers. The rampant corruption within SAPS and metro police have been exposed over the past few weeks. That is indicative of the failure of the police to gather the trust of community members, many of whom would well be aware of those who have been involved in corruption among the police. If they trusted the police, they would have readily come forward with relevant information, knowing that they would be protected and not exposed by those they are reporting to, as it has happened many times.

Now, my question to you hon Acting Minister is: What is the Minister and his department doing to foster improved collaboration between the police and our communities, as without them, the problem of crime and corruption will never

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be resolved, and we will continue to need the help of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF to deal with organised crime within our communities. Is there a strategy? And what is going to be done? Thank you, Minister.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon Meshoe, I agree with you that restoring trust among our people in our communities is going to be critical as we reset policing. So, one of the areas I am focusing on is to revive and resuscitate the community policing model that I believe was implemented in the first years of our transition, and then perhaps over the last decade has lost some efficacy.

On Friday, I am meeting with Minmec, and one of the items on the agenda will be about restoring community policing as one of the pillars of our response. I am particularly interested in the role of community patrollers, their training, and their funding because I think that the community has a critical role to play in the fight against crime.

May I also mention, hon Meshoe that, I am going to establish an interim governance council to assist the Ministry with the implementation of the Madlanga Commission's recommendations to

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reset policing on a new path, and in that way, contribute to the restoration of the trust of our people in their police service, which is critically important if we are going to win the fight for safety and against crime. Thank you for your question.

Ms J L MOKOENA: Minister, given that the House has established an inquiry into gang-related violence in the Western Cape, how is the police redirecting resources to the Western Cape? Will this redirection not affect the functional capacity of other areas or provincial resource development? I thank you House Chair.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon Mokoena, there are four provinces that are affected by gang violence. The Western Cape certainly has been the epicentre. So, it's appropriate that we direct increased attention to the Western Cape alongside other provinces that will be reflected in the deployment of the SANDF. I can confirm that 160 retired detectives have been re-employed in the SA Police Service, 62 of whom will be deployed in the Western Cape.

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Ms L M SCHICKERLING: Hon Minister, we already know that there's a massive collapse of integrity across all the departments in the SAPS. How will you ensure that crime intelligence, which itself is under a cloud, is not investigating its own corruption? Thank you very much House Chair.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon Schickerling, I indicated in my earlier response, that I agree with the import of the question that was put earlier, that the regulatory framework for crime intelligence needs urgent attention. In fact, I've already asked Deputy Minister Mathale to look at this question. It was of interest to me that the Minister of State Security indicated that this matter is also under consideration in her department.

The current position is that crime intelligence is operating under a 1978 Act. That's an apartheid piece of legislation. I think our failure to introduce an accountability framework is one of the most serious failures of our constitutional democracy. This matter certainly needs urgent attention, alongside steps to strengthen crime intelligence, because the

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intelligence function is absolutely critical if we're going to successfully implement a strategy to fight organised crime.

Mr G TAAIBOSCH: Hon Acting Minister, do you accept that if officials, including the Minister of Police, are implicated in serious allegations of corruption, remain in positions of authority, pending investigations, that public confidence in SAPS cannot be restored? Thank you, hon House Chair.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon member, when steps are taken where there are allegations of either disciplinary misconduct or where there are allegations of criminality, I think the hon member will recognise that the members of the SA Police Service, like any other organisation, need fair treatment and lawful treatment under the law. But I have to say that I think one of the areas that needs attention, and I want to emphasise this point, is that there has to be consequence management. That's why, with respect to the individuals identified by the Madlanga Commission, all 14 of them, precautionary steps and suspensions were implemented immediately.

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I think where police officers face allegations of criminal conduct, punitive suspensions may be warranted depending on the circumstances. There is no doubt in my mind that where criminal conduct is proven, that should lead to dismissal, because the underlying logic of your question is that we can only restore the trust of our people if there's accountability.

I want to give you this assurance that we are fully committed to implementing rigorously an integrity agenda as part of the reset process for the SA Police Service and in the criminal justice system as a whole. Thank you.

Rev K R J MESHOE: Minister, thank you for those answers. Can you reassure members of the public, and obviously this House, that with the turnaround strategy you have and after the vetting process, you can assure South Africans that we are not going to live with criminality as high as it is today, because people do not want the idea of living forever with the fear that our people have.

So, they need assurance that we now have a Minister who is still acting, who is serious, and assures the public that he's

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going to do away with criminality, so that our parents and our children can be able to sleep in peace every night. Thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon Meshoe, like you I have a belief in my mortality. So I'm not sure that I can give you that assurance, but I can give you members of the House and the public the assurance that their safety and security is my priority. That I'm determined while I'm in office to make a meaningful impact in terms of improving safety and security, and that you have the responsibility to hold me accountable. Thank you.

Question 77:

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Chair, as a matter of principle, the State Security Agency does not disclose what it investigates or what it does not investigate. This is governed by the principle of the need-to-know basis for the purposes of protecting national security and the security of intelligence operations. This is drawn from the National Strategic Intelligence Act, Act 39 of 1994, as amended, that defines counterintelligence to mean, amongst others, protecting intelligence and any classified information.

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Furthermore, the Minimum Information Security Standards contained in the National Information Security Policy and Guidelines emphasises the need-to-know principle to secure information. However, the State Security Agency, working with other security cluster departments, secured the national and provincial elections of 2024 successfully and ensured that there were no threats to national security or the undermining of the sovereignty of South Africa. Thank you, hon House Chair.

Mr N G MYBURGH: Chair, to the Minister: In light of a recent report by *News24*, which was based on authenticated leaked Russian-language documents, as well as a report by the Institute for Security Studies of November 2024, which describes in considerable detail projects by Russia's foreign intelligence service on various continents, including Africa, projects aimed at influencing public opinion and which, for example, referred specifically to a social media campaign implemented and aimed at discrediting a major political party in South Africa, can the hon Minister confirm whether the State Security Agency or any of our Intelligence Services are aware of plans by Russian-linked influencers to target any one or more South African political parties in order to influence

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domestic political opinion? Most importantly, to what extent have our Intelligence Services managed to investigate, profile, and monitor the efforts of foreign actors to recruit and pay South Africans as agents of disinformation aimed at improperly influencing public opinion in our country? Thank you.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: House Chair, as a matter of principle, the State Security Agency does not comment on leaks. Whether they are true or false, we cannot deny or confirm them. As the hon Myburgh is a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence, he will be aware that we will soon be tabling the operational directions of both the foreign branch and the domestic branch. Part of what we are covering is how we are responding to influence operations of foreign intelligence services and other subversive mechanisms. We will leave it to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence to deal with that level of detail. Thank you.

Mr M DLELANGA: House Chair, the challenge of disinformation is quite critical. However, I want to ascertain whether the challenge of disinformation requires legislation to be

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strengthened. Can the Minister provide an update on the implementation of the cybercrime legislation? Thank you.

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: House Chair, I thank the member for that supplementary question. We are reviewing the draft cybersecurity strategy to bring it up to date with current trends in malinformation, misinformation, and disinformation, including influence operations and narrative-driven intentions to disrupt not only the social cohesion of the country but also to destabilise the economy.

That strategy will be submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence so that we can then quickly bring up the cybersecurity policy and the relevant Bill for the committee to process. The Bill will have to be consulted on with the other portfolio committees before it comes to the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence. We will get the assistance of our sister departments to table the Bill before the other portfolio committees. Thank you.

Ms M P KOBE: House Chair, to the Minister: We agree with you that South Africa's elections need to be safeguarded against

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unscrupulous agents that seek to undermine our democracy and that relevant legislation is needed to deal with this.

Well, in South Africa, we have a very unique problem of superficial think tanks, bankrolled by political parties in this very House and foreign agents, with the intention of creating political polls that shape public perception just before elections and that seek to shape voting behaviour towards a particular party's agenda. In light of this, ActionSA has introduced an Election Integrity Bill that seeks to enhance election integrity and prevent this sort of electoral interference by these parties and agents. Minister, the question is simple: Will you support this Bill?

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon House Chair, we agree that, in all manner of forms, we must work together to deal with influence operations targeting our country. We will be guided by the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence regarding the Election Integrity Bill. Thank you very much.

Mr A K NGOBESE: Chair, to the Minister: How has the State Security Agency engaged with the Independent Electoral Commission and other relevant law enforcement bodies to

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develop a co-ordinated response framework to prevent, investigate, and prosecute future disinformation campaigns aimed at undermining electoral integrity?

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon House Chair, the State Security Agency is part of the criminal justice cluster that works closely with the Independent Electoral Commission to ensure that we safeguard the integrity of elections. We cannot detail the activities and operations of the State Security Agency, but we can assure hon members of this House that we work within the criminal justice cluster to ensure we do our part to secure the integrity of elections.

Mr N G MYBURGH: Chair, to the Minister: Given the growing signs of mistrust in our democratic dispensation amongst the South African public at large, and substantiated by various studies, as I am sure you are well aware of, and given the now verified and documented projects by foreign actors like Russia's foreign intelligence service to influence our domestic politics, and given the comments by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Co-operation earlier today in which he seemingly expressed our undying love and support for Mother Russia, can you tell the House today

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unequivocally that our Intelligence Services are capable of safeguarding the credibility of our electoral processes against such foreign threats, especially given the upcoming local government election later this year? Thank you.

[Applause.]

The MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: Hon House Chair, I can assure this House that the State Security Agency is capable of securing elections, including the forthcoming local government election, working together with all members of the security cluster against all foreign influences and foreign actors. Whether from the West, the East, or the North, we are capable of dealing with them.

We must also indicate that the battle against disinformation, misinformation, and disruptiveness is not limited to one hemisphere. It spans all hemispheres when it comes to Africa because of the interest in the mineral resources of the African continent and the opportunities that we have.

Therefore, the continuous labelling of one country over others is mischievous. All countries have interests in this country and in the African continent, and we are responding

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accordingly. It does not matter from which hemisphere in the world foreign intelligence services come. As the State Security Agency, we are responding, and we are ready. Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence will be fully briefed on these measures. Thank you very much.

Question 11:

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon House Chair, hon Mathafa, following the pronouncement by the President on 12 February, the Minister of Finance and I met with the judiciary, not only to look at the matters that relate to the specialised courts, but funding completely for the judiciary. We have, however, agreed that we will look at the administration of justice, in line with the Constitution, in terms of working together with the judiciary to ensure that we build capacity.

During the tenure of Minister Lamola, he embarked on the rationalisation of the courts. And during this work, it was understood that all our courts are actually undercapacitated and proposed an immediate increase of 20% across all our high courts in terms of appointment of judges.

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We have started this work to look at all of them. We have agreed with the Minister of Finance that we will start with 50 judges in addition to the establishment that is currently there, so that we can build capacity across.

So, this will work together with all other courts to address the issue of case backlogs and to attend to the issues that have been pronounced by the President. Thank you very much.

Mr O M MATHAFA: House Chair, thank you, Minister, for the comprehensive response. Beyond the intention to establish specialised commercial crime courts, and to capacitate judges, what concrete implementation plan, including timelines and measurable performance indicators have you identified and put together? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: What we have identified is that, once you put together the specialised courts and you add the judiciary in terms of the appointment, you are going to have to also include the administration. So, the clerks, the law researchers, together with the registrars, will have to be included, in terms of the other additional work.

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However, we have looked again at other courts. For example, when you look at the North West province, while we can add additional court judges, there is space and capacity to host those additional courts in terms of the infrastructure. But in other courts, we will have to look at the space that we need to ensure that the courts have space or that the judges have their chambers.

So, it will be in a phase-in approach. We will start this year. We are hoping that, with the work that we are doing with the Minister of Finance, by medium term, the announcement will be made for the first rollout of the first cohort. Together with the administration, we have identified 271 posts that need to be added into the establishment now. And work will continue, as we deal with the issue of a single and independent judiciary to build that capacity. Thank you very much.

Mr J ENGELBRECHT: Hon Minister, thank you for your response regarding the departmental processes. However, to ensure these specialised courts deliver on the President's promise to prevent undue delay in critical projects, can you clarify how your department will define and prioritise a critical project

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in the court role? Specifically, what mechanisms will be put in place to ensure these dedicated judges are able to fast-track complex commercial litigation involving state infrastructure spending without getting bogged down by the very backlogs these courts are meant to solve?

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: House Chair, hon Engelbrecht, the work that we have done ... I just want to give a context on how this work has come about. This is the work that has been done by Operation Vulindlela, where it has identified that, in many of the areas where investment is looked at, for example, oil and gas, you find that, where the country, a company or an investor wanted to explore on our shores, you have four challenges that take forever and the investor eventually leaves our shores to go to another country.

So, there are those mechanisms already that have been identified. It is trade matters concerning the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, DTIC. When an investor wants to come into the country, they have a dispute.

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So, we are looking at various mechanisms, not only in terms of addressing the issues around specialised courts, but also around the options of tribunal, where it is a conflict between two investors - a local investor and an international investor.

But more so, again, we have seen how our commercial crime courts have worked. You are able to work with the judiciary. The judge president in the provinces would be able to identify the cases that would need special attention. Similarly, we have done that with the Road Accident Fund court cases in the courts where the judges are able to identify specific areas on the court roll to deal with those backlogs. So, the same mechanism will follow in this regard. Thank you very much.

Mr M MANYI: House Chair, Minister, thank you very much for those responses. I see you mentioned the figure 50. We just want clarity on that 50. Does it mean there will be 50 commercial courts or what is going to happen? Can you also explain where these commercial courts will be placed geographically? What ICT system is envisaged for those courts and what are the costs related to it? I know you say you are

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talking to Treasury, but what are the indicative figures?

Thank you. [Applause.]

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Manyi, the number 50 we are talking is on the basis of the rationalisation report that former Deputy Chief Justice Moseneke has produced. So, it gives us 20% per High Court. So, we have worked out ... So, it is across the country, in addition to the establishment. So, we are not only looking at addressing the investment issues. We are looking at addressing the whole issue of capacity regarding the judges, so that we can deal with all the matters that relates to it.

With a specialised court, we are looking at the economic hub, where we are seeing these challenges. So, we are looking mostly at Gauteng, the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape. It would not be everywhere, but that work is still ongoing and it will be spread. Hence, I said, 20% per court.

Then we will be able to say out of that, delegate a team that will be in with these high-pressured courts to deal with specifically the commercialisation court. If I am not mistaken, the figure that we have estimated to look at

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currently - it is still being reworked - is almost around 80 million. Thank you.

Ms J S PETERSEN: Hon House Chair, Minister, we know that corruption cases collapse because agencies do not co-ordinate. Have the National Prosecuting Authority NPA, the Special Investigation Unit, SIU, the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, DPCI, and the Asset Forfeiture Unit, AFU, signed binding operational protocols, not in discussion and not being finalised, but signed? If not, Minister, how can you claim that these courts will work? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Hon Peterson, maybe I must explain how these agencies work, because they work independently of each other, but we allow for integration in terms of co-ordinated work. So, they cannot sit where they sign MOUs to influence each other. It is not allowed by law. But we do what we call case management.

Case backlog is not only as a result of investigating institutions, but simple things such as an interpreter not arriving in court can cause case backlog. Simple things. For example, I visited Umlazi recently in February. One of the

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issues I found is that we have a problem with legal aid representatives in a magistrate court. Due to the shortage of legal aid representatives, the magistrate had to schedule cases on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, so that the legal aid representatives could go to others, and we are addressing that.

So, case management is important in every province. We have what we called the place where the heads of institutions such as the Commissioner of police, the National Director of Public Prosecutions, NDPP, and all others sit with the judicial. Again, in the provinces, the provincial commissioner, provincial DPP and all others sit with the judge president and at all the other institutions. I am just making an example. In those meetings, they look at the complexities of the cases they are dealing with. They look at what the issues are. For example, sometimes we have a court not sitting for a week because of water. We have been able to solve those things.

So, those case management matters look at various issues and address them. And since we have re-established the case management per court, we are seeing the turnaround time we have to deal with. Thank you very much.

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Mr O M MATHAFA: House Chair, hon Minister, will these specialised commercial crime courts be equitably distributed across provinces to ensure broader access to justice, particularly in emerging economic hubs outside of metropolitan areas? Thank you, Minister.

The MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Unfortunately, not, because they must have a number. So, you must justify why you are creating one in that area. There must be demand. And from our data, it does not show that, for example, we have such cases in Mpumalanga, we don't have such cases in the Free State. We have dominance of them here in the Western Cape, we have dominance of them in the Eastern Cape, we have dominance of them in Gauteng. And we have some numbers in the Northern Cape. We don't think we will establish that in the Northern Cape, but we want to deal with that within the mainstream in terms of the capacity and what we can deal with.

But it is something that we will rework, if there is a need, because we don't want to create a specialised area and then there is not a need. So, you must work on the basis of demand and ensure that there are enough cases to be enrolled, to

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justify the resources that you are utilizing for that. Thank you very much.

Question 29:

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, the Military Veterans Appeals Board has not been functional since 2024. I am told that members were appointed in 2023. It was during their tenure that some of the members raised concerns about their remuneration which I was informed were benchmarked against Treasury tariffs and thus they did not perform their duties related to the appeals board. This stalemate over tariffs resulted in challenges experienced by the Ministry and the Department of Military Veterans resulting in backlogs of cases to be dealt with by the board. Members who felt aggrieved by the remuneration tendered their resignations, thus resulting in the board being dysfunctional and unable to convene. It was at this point that I directed that a new process be undertaken to constitute a new board. This process was done last year, resulting in a number of applications and following the due process for establishing the board.

As a Minister, I have now appointed eight members of the Military Veterans Appeals Board with effect from 1 March after

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following due process. The term of office for this new board starts from March 2026 to February 2021. The first session of this board will take place on 6 March this year. The board has been constituted in accordance with the guidelines and rules of what to do, and the question is what have been the difficulties. It has created major backlogs and difficulties for the veterans who require the services of the board. Thank you very much, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you Minister. The first supplementary question will be asked by the hon Kubukeli.

Mr P KUBUKELI: Hon Minister, as section 21 of the Military Veterans Act, Act 18 of 2011, deals with the composition and appointment of members of the Military Veterans Appeals Board, subsection 1 states that the appeals board consists of at least three persons appointed by the Minister in consultation with the association.

Under the definitions in the Act, "the association" means the National Military Veterans Association referred to in section 7. In other words, this refers to the SA National Military

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Veterans Association, SANMVA, which comprises of uMkhonto weSizwe Military Veterans Association, MKMVA, Azanian People's Liberation Army Military Veterans Association, Apla MVA, Azanian National Liberation Army Military Veterans Association, Azaanla MVA, Transkei Defence Force Military Veterans Association, TDF MVA, Ciskei Defence Force Military Veterans Association, CDF MVA, Bophuthatswana Defence Force Military Veterans Association, BDF MVA, the SA Cape Corps Military Veterans Association, SACC MVA and the Council of Military Veterans' Organisations, CMVO. Minister, the question is: Did the Minister consult SANMVA about these three candidates in her process of appointing the appeals board? If so, kindly tabulate Minister, and who did you consult in SANMVA? If not, please tabulate for us what process other than the one that is there in the Act did you follow? So, I need that answer, Minister. Minister, I want it to be clear that consultation was explained before this Parliament in 2016. I have a document here with me which is a memorandum that was written by the legal services - the Parliamentary Legal Adviser in 2016 with reference 104B ... [Time expired.]

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Based on the report I received and given that there is an established

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process for constituting the board, I was satisfied that the due process as stipulated in terms of how to constitute the board was followed - unless there is other information. So, do not have the names of the three individuals at hand, as I did not expect that specific questions about them would be asked. If the member wants me to provide names, I cannot do so. There are eight of them and they were appointed through a process: some had to apply and while others were appointed following consultations. So, I cannot share with the member the names of the people, I was informed that certain appointments came through consultation. From the report I received, I was assured that the process was followed to the letter, but if there is any doubt, I am willing to review the matter thoroughly to verify whether report that I was provided with was accurate. Thank you, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The second supplementary question will be asked by the hon Hala.

Mr M M HALA: Thank you, hon House Chair. Hon Minister, what significant role did the department set out in recent months to finalise the constitution of the appeals board? What key milestones have already been successfully completed in the

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appointment process? How will the forthcoming operationalisation of this vital structure deliver more efficient and equitable outcomes for the military veterans? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, I can confirm that appointing this board is a real process. You have to consult; you have to get nominations in writing; you have to shortlist, so it's not a very easy or obvious process. It took some time because we only started the process in November 2025 when we were unable to get the other members with design or even get the remaining members of the board to convene. It took some time unfortunately. It resulted in huge backlogs, but the milestone is that indeed the eight have been nominated and by 6 Friday it will be properly inaugurated so that if there are any difficulties, I am still willing to see what it is. This Friday, the milestone is that the board will be formally constituted and inaugurated to deal with the huge backlogs that the gap has created.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon Minister. The third supplementary question will be asked by the hon Niehaus.

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Mr C G NIEHAUS: Thank you, House Chair. Hon Minister, finally you managed to do something after five years that the board did not exist and then a dysfunctional board was appointed. Last year the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans had a disastrous briefing from the previous board. We told you that things are not working. It took months for you to start taking action. In the meantime, military veterans have suffered severely. What measures has the Department Of Military Veterans put in place to properly record all the appeals lodged since this long period of previous boards not existing and the last board having lapsed? Thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, as I said, the board is going to formally function on the sixth. I have not been a Minister for five years, I have been a Minister for less than two years and I have done everything in my power to make sure that I follow the due process. From the 6th, all matters that are supposed to be attended to- which is not my responsibility - will be handled by the board. I am going to have an orientation, and they will deal with the backlog in accordance with the law.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): The fourth supplementary question will be asked by the hon Nontenja.

Ms C T NONTENJA: Thank you, hon House Chair. Hon Minister there are many unprocessed appeals and backlogs due to lack of a functional appeals board. What effective measures and reasonable timelines do the department have in place to expedite the clearing of the unprocessed appeals and backlogs?

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, the board is going to be constituted formally on the 6th. And their work is exactly to do what has been done. Our responsibility as a department is to support that board as an independent board to do its work.

After they have been properly inaugurated, they developed a business plan. We can be asked whether the board can present or even appear before us, but for now, the board is only going to be inducted this Friday. I don't know what their plans or timelines are. We can indicate to them that the gap has created lots of challenges and difficulties for military veterans. They have to move with speed to make sure that they

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can deal with the backlog and the challenges that we face. But it's only starting on Friday.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: House Chair?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, hon member.

Mr N L S KWANKWA: Is it deliberate sabotage that the camera wasn't facing my member when she was asking the question to the Minister? [Laughter.] It focused on you solely and then it moved to the Minister ...

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): I am not controlling the cameras, hon member, but I think they take note of what you are mentioning. The members who ask the follow-up questions want to be on camera; they want to be seen. So, can those who are controlling the equipment keep that in mind, please? The last supplementary question will be asked by the hon Kubukeli.

Mr P KUBUKELI: Thank you, hon Minister. The last question that I asked was: Did you consult SANMVA? And you were evasive. Minister, I wish to state, based on the document I wanted to

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read, that it is clear that where a statute requires parties to act in consultation with each other, there must be concurrence between those parties. Further, the term in comparison to after consultation is a more exacting standard and requires that each party gives consideration to the views of the other before a final decision is reached. There must be agreement - or in simpler terms, a meeting of the minds where each party confers with each other, apply their minds in considering the pros and cons of the matter through discussion or debate. Hon Minister, if you fail to consult SANMVA, I am the President of MKMVA, which is the member SANMVA ... [Time expired.] ... so, it means, Minister, you are going to take this up.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: I have no reason to evade anything because as personally I have nothing to lose or win by not having anyone. I am saying that if the member is aware of an organisation which was supposed to have been consulted and has not been, he must raise it as a complaint, and we will address the matter. So, I have no interest in living in ... I mean, what do I stand to lose, whichever party it may be? If, for instance, all relevant parties have been consulted - as long as they are parties

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which are legitimate from the report, then I am satisfied. I have no interest in evading anything. I have no interest for or against anyone. If there's a complaint that we brought forward, we will address it appropriately.

Question 84:

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: Hon House Chair and thank you for the question. This merciless killing occurred four years ago outside Ms Mtwá's house in Umtata. I am advised by the SA Police Service that the investigation has not reached a dead end, that an investigation team is continuing to pursue several evidentiary lines of inquiry, and that if sufficient evidence is collected to link a suspect to the crime, the case will be presented to the National Prosecuting Authority, NPA, for prosecution. Thank you.

Mr M KHOZA: House Chair, it is with great disappointment and pain that I stand here today to ask the Minister to respond to the case that happened four years ago. It is painful, Minister, that we continue to experience the brutal murder and the rape of women and girl children with no visible justice being served. Acting Minister, what must we go back and tell the families who remain bleeding and broken? Without justice,

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what must we say to them, because you are standing here telling us that you were briefed by the SA Police Service, which suggests to us that there's nothing that you have done since you have taken the reins as the Acting Minister? Are you telling us that you are doing nothing to act on this case because you were briefed by the SAPS? Can I ask you, Minister, to stand up now and face the family? Tell them what have you personally done? What concrete and time-bound investigative steps have you taken? And please be honest, if there is nothing, say it here. We know that there is nothing that you can do together with your Cabinet. Just stand up and say it, we will take it. And we, as the EFF, will take steps after that. Thank you very much, Chair. [Applause.]

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: Indeed, hon member, you are right to be angry about this matter because justice has not been served. And that, regrettably, is the condition that many victims of crime throughout our country face every day. And this is why it is essential for us to build a police service that can investigate all crimes and bring criminals to book. May I just say that Ministers do not investigate crimes. We do not involve ourselves in specific cases, nor should we, particularly given that one of the matters under consideration

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by the Madlanga Commission concerns the limits of political interference in ongoing investigations. But thank you for the question. [Interjections.]

Ms O M C MAOTWE: On a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): What is your point of order, hon member?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: The Minister has not answered the question. What have you done? What have you done? Tell us what you have done.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member. Hon member. Order, hon members. [Interjections.]

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Do not tell us that it is not responsible to investigate. We know that, but you are the head of police. What have you done as a political head?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, that is not a point of order. It is not a point of order. Order. The

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second supplementary question will be asked by the hon Mokoena.

Ms J L MOKOENA: Minister, how many investigators have been assigned the case, and what will have explained the change in leadership? Secondly, does this case reflect systematic inefficiency in investigating gender-based violence cases, more especially in cases concerning alleged high-profile or politically connected persons? I thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: With respect to this investigation, hon members, I have given an answer, which I ... and I do not think I can take the matter any further today.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: On a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Yes, hon member.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Chair, we have been speaking about this conduct in the Chief Whips' Forum. We cannot have a Minister

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who cannot answer sensitive matters, especially the killing of the women. The Minister just stood here and said there is nothing he can do. And you, Chair, you do not even force the Minister to answer. What is the point of this exercise that we are doing here?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you, hon member.

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: No, Chair. Please do not protect Ministers who do not do their work here.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Hon member, order.

Yes, hon member, why do you want to be recognised?

Mr C M DUGMORE: Chair, I would like you to rule on this issue, because previously, it has been raised in the House that when a Minister responds, the person asking the question might not necessarily like or agree with that, but the response has been given. I think this is a case where the Minister has been upfront, he has been honest, and he has indicated what he has done. Thank you. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: A point of shouting.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members. Order. Hon members, the matter of gender-based violence and femicide is a matter that a parliamentary committee is also currently seized with, and that report appears on the Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports, ATC. The purpose of the question session is for members to, as far as what is possible, get a response to the questions that they ask, and we do expect the members of the executive to respond to the best of their ability. And it has been raised previously that the responses that are there may not be satisfactory to the member or the party that has put the question, and we must be meticulous from the side of the executive to try to respond as far as possible. What I would suggest that we do, because I do not have the answer, I am not in the executive, right? I do not have the answer. What I suggest we should do is, hon Minister, that you interact with the relevant member who has asked the question so that - no, do not dictate to me, you have made your point, do not prescribe to me how to deal with the matter - if possible, to get more information on the state of that investigation that is taking place on a murder that occurred four years ago in the Eastern Cape. It is a serious source of concern for victims of crime and their families not to be able to get

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enough information as to what is going on. The third supplementary question ... hon Maotwe.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: On a point of order. Chair, it is very disappointing. These questions for oral reply were sent as early as last week. The Minister has been sitting with these questions since then. The Minister could have done something between then and now when he became aware of this issue. For him to come here and say he has not done anything, it is a disappointment. He is the Minister of Police. Correctly as you said, this matter is very sensitive. It is a gender-based violence issue. The poor child was killed. He even has the details himself. But he comes here and says it is not his role to investigate. He is the political head of the police. The buck stops with him. He should have made sure that this matter gets the necessary attention and gets attended to.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: We are not talking about the matter of yesterday. This matter is old, Chair.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Thank you.

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Ms O M C MAOTWE: It is very disappointing for the Minister to come here and behave as if we are at Wits University. This is not Wits University.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Your comments are noted, hon member. [Applause.] ... The third supplementary question will be asked by the hon Schickerling.
[Interjections.]

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Chair, but the Minister wants to respond.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, hon member, I am presiding. [Interjections.]

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: So, why are you suppressing him?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, do not dictate to me how to run a question-and-answer session. The Rules are there. [Interjections.]

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Do not get emotional, Chair, because I am indicating to you that he is prepared to ...

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): No, but do not be disruptive as well, hon member. Do not be disruptive. The hon Schickerling.

Ms L M SCHICKERLING: Hon Minister, South Africans go to sleep at night afraid, they wake up in the morning afraid, and more so whistleblowers and their families. I would just like to know whether any internal disciplinary steps have been taken against the officials in this case who failed to investigate and those that failed to secure and protect the witnesses? Thank you. [Applause.]

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: Thank you for the question, hon member. It is an important question. Let me also address the members who asked the question. So, this matter occurred four years ago, long before I was appointed ... [Interjections.] ... one second, let me respond.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr C T Frolick): Order, hon members. You wanted the response. The Minister is responding. Give the Minister an opportunity to reply.

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The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: When the question is posed to me, I do what all Ministers do. We approached the department for the information concerning the matter that could not possibly be within my personal knowledge. This was the answer they gave me, and it is an answer that I have communicated to the House ... [Interjections.] ... Now, I assure you members, that I understand the seriousness of this individual case and all the matters concerning gender-based violence in the country. And we have taken steps - I have asked Deputy Minister Boshielo to lead a specific focus on gender-based violence following the President's classification of gender-based violence as a national crisis.

Now, member Schickerling has asked a question about whistleblowing, because witnesses were killed in this case. I think it is a good question. It is an important question. I am committing to going back to the department to ask further questions about this matter and specifically to raise the question whether the investigation has been adequate and whether the fact that witnesses were killed in this case was properly attended to. I understand that questions in the House are also a profoundly political ... [Time expired.]

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An HON MEMBER: Thank you for your honesty, Minister.

Ms O M C MAOTWE: On a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order, hon members, please do not unmute and speak without being recognised. Hon Maotwe, why do you want to be recognised?

Ms O M C MAOTWE: Yes, Chair, earlier on I said the question was submitted as early as last week. It was on 19 February when we submitted the questions for the Peace and Security Cluster. So, the Minister received this question on 19 February. Today is the 4th of March and he does not have an answer. This is an indication of a Minister who does not care about the people of South Africa, particularly women, in the main.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Maotwe ...

[Interjections.]

Ms O M C MAOTWE: And it must be noted like that.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Maotwe, can I just say, that is not a point of order, but this specific first question was asked by your member. The Rules have now been changed to allow your member to have another opportunity at the end of the round of questions. And that type of comment, with respect, your member must make during that last intervention. This is not a point of order. The fourth supplementary question will be asked by the hon Shongwe.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Chairperson, I will ask the question on behalf of hon Shongwe.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): You are welcome.

Mr J S NGUBANE: Hon Acting Minister, given that now you have joined the chorus on reliance on phrases like ongoing investigations are waiting for a report, I do not know, on many serious matters, including even high-profile cases, such as many deaths of former mayors of Johannesburg, Mayor Makhubo, Mayor Dolly D, and Mayor Mpho Moerane. What assurance can you give the House that such investigations are subject to time-bound oversight and will not remain indefinitely unresolved without transparent communication to the public and

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as well the affected families who are waiting indefinitely for the answers of their loved ones who are killed or murdered without any feedback to them? Thank you, Chair. [Applause.]

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: Hon presiding officer, regarding the obligations of a member of the Cabinet to answer questions as fully as possible, I can assure you once again that I take that commitment very seriously. The SA Police Service gets more questions than any other department. We had, when I took office, more than 600 questions. They were all answered by the end of the year. And as of today, there is no unanswered question. So, the idea ... it is good to oppose, hon members, but there must be a rational basis for your opinions. And I am saying to you, there is not a single question outstanding. And as a member of this House, I am sure you are aware of that fact but choose to ignore that fact because this is a public forum. Now, as regards police investigations, every member of this House and every member of the public knows that there are many investigations of criminal activity, criminal conduct, and many victims that go improperly investigated. I cannot give you in all good faith an answer today that every case of criminality will be properly investigated by the Police Service and that all the

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culprits will be brought to book. And you, in all honesty, cannot make that demand of me and make that the basis of an insinuation that I do not care, and I am not doing my work ...

[Time expired.]

Mr M KHOZA: House Chair, we want to give the Acting Minister the last chance to respond to this question. Acting Minister, you stood up here to tell us that you only went to the SAPS officials to extract information which us as Members of Parliament can equally do ... [Interjections.] ... So, we are calling upon you as the executive authority to at least give us guidance on what concrete steps have you taken to bring to rest this issue? You come here and tell us that you have done nothing. Minister, the follow-up question is: Since November last year, the gender-based violence and femicide have been declared a national crisis. Is there any single case that you can bring to this House that you have investigated and finalised? And, Minister, it is not wrong for you ... [Time expired.] ... If you are failing, can you please resign? [Interjections.] ... You are just acting. If you cannot act, please step aside.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order. Hon Khoza, please do not disregard the Chair. Order. Hon Khoza, thank you. Your time has expired. Please take your seat. Hon Minister.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: Hon presiding officer, notwithstanding some of the spectacle that has been displayed on this matter, I commit to go back to the department to ensure that I am able to give a fuller response to the House on this matter. I cannot give you that assurance now. I can get... [Interjections]

Mr G E KOBANE: On a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon Minister, please take your seat. Hon Member, what is your point of order?

Mr G E KOBANE: My point of order, I think they made a mistake to appoint him, he is too old for this. [Laughter.]
[Interjections.]

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): No, hon member, that is not a point of order. Do not disrespect this House and the Rules.

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Hon Minister, please continue. Order. Order, hon members. Give the Minister a chance to conclude.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE: So, the House is entitled to accountability from me. I think a reasonable expectation is for me to go back to the department ask more probing questions and try and give a fuller response than the one I have received from the department today. Thank you.

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: On a point of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Yes, hon member. Why do you want to be recognised?

Ms N V MENTE-NKUNA: No, Chair, I think because the Minister is new, he must withdraw the remark he just made. He cannot use a very painful experience of Namhla's family as a spectacle that we demonstrate. This is not a joke. This is a frustration and a painful experience of women daily in Umtata in particular. So, he cannot call it a spectacle demonstration. He must withdraw that.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon member, thank you for that intervention. However, clearly the Minister referred to the way in which he was dealt with by members.

[Interjections.] Order, hon members ... [Interjections.]

Ms H O MKHALIPHI: Why are you speaking on his behalf? Why? Because women are killed here daily. Why are you entering?

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Hon members. Order. If the Minister said something that you do not like, it does not mean that I need him to retract that order ... [Interjections.] ... Hon members, if you think the Minister reflected on ... [Interjections.]

Mr S LONZI: He must withdraw. He must withdraw.

An HON MEMBER: Minister must withdraw. It is as simple as that.

Mr S LONZI: Tell him to withdraw.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you. Order. Order ...
[Interjections] ... I have made my ruling. If you are unhappy
about it, you can write to the Speaker. [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You are out of order.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you. Question 13 has
been asked hon Mbiyo to the hon Acting Minister ...
[Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: Your ruling is wrong

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order. Hon member, I have
made my ruling.

An HON MEMBER: It is wrong.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order. I want to recognise
the member there at the back. However, let me make it very
clear, if it is about my ruling, I have made it.

An HON MEMBER: On a point of order.

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order. I am recognising the member at the back. Hon member.

Mr S LONZI: Chair, you must not pre-empt what I am going to say. You must note me and allow me to speak, and then you make your ruling. Gender-based violence has been classified as a national crisis ... [Interjections.] ... That is a lie. President Ramaphosa ... he has classified it as a national disaster.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Order ... [Interjections.]

An HON MEMBER: You are debating. That is a point of debate.

Mr S LONZI: He clearly does not understand his role, and he must correct that statement.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Thank you. Please sit down. Please take your seat now. That is not a point of order. It is a point of debate. Question 13 has been asked by the hon Mbiyo to the Acting Minister of Police. The question is what measures he will put in place to step up the fight against

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organised crime and criminal syndicates using technology, intelligence and integrated law enforcement. The hon Minister.

Question 13:

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you, hon presiding officer. I reported to the portfolio committee this morning together with the National Commissioner that the government has adopted and integrated co-ordinated intelligence driven approach to fight organised crime. That strategy has been adopted. The national organised crime combating group addresses 12 dimensions of organised crime. The dimensions include gang violence, cross border crimes, extortion, vehicle and truck hijacking, political killings, proliferation of firearms, stock theft, transport violence, drugs and substance abuse, infrastructure crimes, illicit trading and all forms of organised crime. The implementation model is underpinned by the following strategic principles, namely, centralised command with decentralised execution, intelligence-led tasking, multidimensional organised crime direct, disruption, joint and interdepartmental integration, sustainable and prevention displacement governance, accountability and compliance.

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I think it's an important development. The adoption of an organised crime strategy is funded partly out of the Criminal Assets Recovery Account, Cara, fund and partly reflected in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, MTEF, budget. I would recommend to members to look and examine the budget to indicate which funding has been allocated to the implementation of the organised crime strategy. The challenges are going to be in the implementation because the implementation is going to require further resourcing. It is going to require the development of new capabilities, particularly in detective services and crime intelligence. I can give further information if required.

But let me pay attention to one particular area, and that is, the application of technology. Clearly, as technology evolves its applications to law enforcement also evolve and new capabilities and new possibilities are possible. These technology applications are very much part of the presidential initiatives focusing on digitisation and modernisation which is across the Criminal Justice cluster. With respect to policing, we are looking at applications for, for instance, the reporting of criminal cases, the reporting of motor accidents, the certifying of documents and so forth. With

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respect to organised crime, specifically, we are looking at applications for digital forensic investigation capabilities to track illicit financial flows, artificial intelligence, AI, applications to map resource and asset infrastructure of organised criminal networks and the use of drones to identify smuggling routes across borders, increased scanning capabilities at ports of entry and so forth. What I would encourage the House to do is to take an interest in the application of technological solutions in the fight against organised crime. I think we're at the very early stages of implementing technological solutions. [Time expired.]

Ms I M MBIYO: Thank you, Chairperson. Minister, how is the new development in police resource deployment indicated in the state of the nation address going to be prioritised in the budgeting?

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you for the question, hon member. In Sona, the President addressed and indicated a particular focus on safety and security. I urge members to examine the budget for every evidence of this renewed focus on safety and security as a core priority underpinning our strategy to improve our growth performance as

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well as to support community wellbeing. That was followed up by Minister Godongwana's Budget. The Budget reflects significant allocations for the enhanced policing, the implementation of an organised crime strategy, border security and so forth. Look at the Peace and Security cluster as a whole, including new resources to support the courts and so forth.

I have written an article, which will be published in the *Business Day*, setting out more detail about this renewed focus on security and how it's being funded. Thank you for the question.

Inkosi R N CEBEKHULU: How does the department plan to coordinate plans, not only to be reactive but also proactive in dismantling organised crime before it threatens communities and the local economy? Thank you.

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you for the question hon member. On Friday, I have convened a meeting of all provincial governments in the Minmec. We will be discussing in detail how to facilitate intergovernmental coordination. There is a need also for a specific focus on local

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government. I am planning to have a meeting with the district mayors together with the provincial MECs as a follow-up to focus on improved co-ordination across the country. I think this is an important way of improving.

Dr M A MAIMANE: Chairperson, to the Acting Minister of Police. I think it is a common cause that unless we deal with organised crime, we may as well forget any future investment in our nation. With recent pronouncements it is clear that the police lack capacity. I want to positive a position that says, I wonder whether in devolving certain police functions, particularly around intelligence, so that metros who have the capability can add their police force to be able to increase the number of police available to fight crime, increased intelligence and achieve convictions. Would you support this view, or would you support a view I've heard here in the City of Cape Town of building the N2 wall so that citizens leave behind walls as an act of trying to fight crime? I would argue that it perpetuates historical practices. Do you think we should have a wall, or we should rather devolve some of the policing function so that we have better intelligence closer to the ground?

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The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Thank you, hon Chair. In this reset moment, I think it is very important, hon Maimane, to keep an open mind. I don't think formulaic responses to this challenge is right. I'm keeping an open mind on the suggestions that I'm hearing.

When it comes to intelligence, we've already in the House talked about the importance of improving accountability of crime intelligence. That's a national function. I think there is also an unanswerable argument or case for strengthening the capabilities of crime intelligence as we implement on a national basis a strategy to fight the cartels and organised crime. On that score, I think we are in full agreement. What I'm not certain about is whether the decentralisation idea is one that makes sense in the field of crime intelligence. If by that is meant to create a separate structure from the national one. But clearly, we have to think about how to locate intelligence capabilities across the system. That might well include elements of decentralisation because policing needs to take place at all levels. I am open to that conversation with you. I think there is also a conversation to be heard since the Police Service is a national police service that operates on a national basis with strong provincial structures whether

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there is a case for decentralisation within the SA Police Service. [Time expired.]

Dr L W MAHLATSI: Thank you very much, Chairperson. Minister, with criminal syndicates using high technology: What digital forensic methodologies and specialised investigative units are currently used by the SA Police Service, SAPS, to authenticated, preserve and analyse social media content for investigative purposes? In relation to the record level of organised crime in South Africa, have you considered bringing back the Troika model?

Xitsonga:

Khanimamba!

English:

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Hon member, remember, I am not aware of that particular model. Perhaps you can share that information with me.

One particular challenge in response to your question that I have identified is that we need to be much better at collecting, gathering and analysing open-source information.

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There is an abundance of open-source information in addition that can be utilised to support the implementation of an organised crime strategy. I did indicate in my earlier response that I am looking at setting up a multistakeholder council with such a capability to monitor the implementation of the organised crime strategy that will sit alongside the intelligence capabilities of crime intelligence, military intelligence and so forth. All of those intelligence sources have to be co-ordinated effectively if we are going to win the fight against organised crime.

But if you have additional information, please, share that with me. Thank you.

Ms I M MBIYO: Thank you. Minister, how will the department monitor or check whether this plan is actually reducing crime in our communities?

The ACTING MINISTER OF POLICE (Prof F Cachalia): Chairperson, I just indicated that in order to ensure that the organised crime strategy that the police have presented to the portfolio committee is effectively implemented, there has to be proper political oversight. And for that purpose, I'm looking at

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setting up a multistakeholder forum supported by open-source information to monitor and assess the outcomes. I've already developed a monitoring framework which sets out the criteria for assessing the implementation of the organised crime strategy.

In addition, I'm going to pay attention to trying to revive the role of the Civilian Secretariat at national level, but also in the provinces because there are crucial capabilities that reside there to exercise oversight over police performance. That is a capability that we've underutilised over the last 10 years or so, and I'm looking to revive that system of oversight. Thank you for that question.

Question 64:

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, the Islamic Republic of Iran, was invited by the lead nation, which is the Republic of China during the initial planning conference in March 2025, to participate in the joint inter-departmental and multinational Exercise Will for Peace.

There was no objection from all other participating members. The Islamic Republic of Iran confirmed the acceptance of the

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invitation in August 2025. The Department of Defence has no responsibility in the approval process before the issuing of the invitation by the lead nations.

Thank you very much, Chair.

Mr C HATTINGH: Hon Chair, first and noting that two of the founding Brics members, Brazil and India, deny that this was a Brics exercise, and they maintain that this is a South African initiative and it was held within our territorial waters.

Section 202 of the Constitution best Supreme Command of the SA National Defence Force, SANDF in the President. He is the Commander-in-Chief. Hon Minister, did the President issue any instruction, guidance or limitation regarding Iran's participation in the Exercise Will for Peace? And if so, was it complied with?

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, I want to repeat. China was the leading party. Exercise Mosi was not only organised by South Africa, but the exercise was using South African water. So, we are the host in terms of the waters.

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The fact that Brazil and India said that - I also heard rumours from the media. It has not come to our attention. I just know that the four countries, South Africa, China, Russia and the Republic of Iran were the ones that were ready to come. Ethiopia was going to come as an observer. Brazil was also going to participate. I'm hearing from the member that they declined because I also heard it through the media, but I don't remember receiving any information.

Chair, Mosi like all other exercises is a historical event. Even this one was planned in 2023. The plans were finalised in 2025. I'm told that the exercises even preceded covid. They were disrupted by covid.

At some stage, we had exercises with France. I don't think the President was invited, because there was no Iran issue. The United States was also invited in the last Mosi. It didn't participate, it withdrew, but it was not the first time it happened.

It's a regular exercise, not only in the Navy, even in the Army, these exercises happen, as well as in the Air Force. So, these are regular inter-country or international exercises

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that happen. The fact that Mosi is international makes it controversial and unnecessary.

Mr W T D PLAATJIES: Minister, now that this exercise has happened, how will you and your department utilise the lessons learned and the outcomes from this exercise? How will it inform ongoing defence diplomacy initiatives, capabilities, development programmes, and contributions to the African Standby Force and other United Nations-mandated operations?

I thank you.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, as I said, these exercises are ongoing exercises between countries. And obviously, after any exercise, even in the Army, there's a debriefing to see what lessons have been gained, but depending on the objectives, what relationships have been built.

So indeed, like all other exercises, there would have been a debriefing and say what have we learned in terms of what we had planned to do. It's a normal ongoing exercise between countries at different times between the different forces.

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There's nothing new that would have happened with Mosi, which does not happen any time.

What these exercises help with is lessons from each other. As I said, it's diplomacy, just to strengthen relationships, but also to learn from each other and strengthen, as I said, relationships between the different countries that are exercising. It's normally very valuable for SA Development Countries, SADC, for our country, but also for the world.

Thank you, Chair.

Mr Z K A CELE: Chair, can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of the specific approval process followed within the SA National Defence Force before the invitation was issued to Iran? Specifically, which department of command first proposed the invitation? Which internal review board or committee assessed it? And at what level was it finally authorised and granted before it was sent?

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chairperson, with due respect, if the member recalls, on Friday, the

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President issued - what do you call it? [Laughter.] No, I'm trying to get the right wording for it.

On Friday, there was a gazette in which the President had established a team through which they were going to investigate all the questions. So, at the risk of answering questions that are supposed to be done by the commission of inquiry, that the President established last week, things are going to be answered there.

So, I'm reluctant to pre-empt what the presentations are going to be before that commission of inquiry. It is a commission of inquiry. I'm sorry I forgot the right term. But it will be answered there, and I can't do it here.

Mr N S MATIASE: Well, I'll take this question on behalf of the EFF.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): Please proceed, hon Matiase.

Sesotho:

Mong N S MATIASE: Mme Motshega, ho a bonahala hore lefapha la hao le mmuso, ha le hlomphe selekane pakeng tsa naha ya rona

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le dinaha tse ding tsa Brics. Le tlontlollotse dinaha tsa Brics ka tsela eo le sebeditseng taba ena ya ho ikwetlisa mmoho ha rona le Iran. Mme re a ipotsa hore na ke eng e kana-kana e le e patang ka ho etsa ...

English:

... the board of inquiry ...

Sesotho:

... ho fuputsa taba e bang e hlakile. Ke eng e kana-kana e le e patang ebang mohlomong ntate Ramaphosa o e entse le ho e tekenela le mmuso wa America, ho pata hore na ke eng e ba e tshabileng ho ka ikwetlisa mmoho le naha ya Iran?

Re batla ho tseba hore na ke hobaneng ha o hlolehile ho hlalosa ka bophara hore na ke eng e masole kapa batsamaisi ba sesole ba se entseng se entseng hore le hanele le ho thibela Iran ho ikwetlisa mmoho le lebotho Afrika Borwa?

Ke a leboha. [Mahofi.]

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: Chair, can I also answer in Sesotho?

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The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): You are welcome.

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: The interpretation is ... [Inaudible.] ...

Sesotho:

Hakere ba itse ha hona botoloki. Nnete ya taba ke hore tsietsi ena e etswa ke ho se bone ka ho tshwana naheng ya rona hore ha hona le ba itseng, ho ba le Iran.

Jwalo ka ha ke hlalosa, *exercise* tsena di etsahala ka dinako tsohle. Le yona ena e ne e tlo etsahala selemo se fitileng empa ka lebaka la G20, re itse re mpe re e kgutlisetse pele. Athe ho tla ba le phapang hara dinaha tse itseng.

Jwale, o bua nnete ha o re, ke larata le sa hlokahaleng. Empa ha Maafrika Borwa a re kopa dikarabo, a kopa komiti e ikemetseng, ha hona hore re ka hana. Re tlameha re ba kgotsofatse hore matsoho a rona a hlwekile mme ha hona letho le lebe le re le entseng. Ba tla ikutlwela haeba e le teng ntho e mpe. Empa, hoya ka nna ...

English:

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... commission of inquiry ...

Sesotho:

... ke ho araba Mafrika Borwa. Ya nang le ditletlebo ka exercise ena, hore ba ikgotsofatse ka bo bona, ha ba na le dipuo tse ding tse itseng kapa ba na le tsebo e teng, ba di tlise di arabuwe pepeneneng.

Ke a leboha.

English:

Mr C HATTINGH: House Chair, due to the Minister's evasiveness, I have to repeat my initial question. I would like to ask the Minister to please listen and please respond. Did the President issue any instruction, guidance or limitation regarding Iran's participation in Exercise Will for Peace? And if so, was it complied with? It's a very compact question, yes or no?

The MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: You ask again, I will answer again. The Islamic Republic of Iran was invited by the lead nation, the People's Republic of China, during the initial planning conference in March 2025 to participate in

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the joint interdepartmental and multinational Exercise Will of Peace. There was no objection from all other participating member states.

The Iran Republic confirmed the acceptance during the main planning conference on August 20. The Department of Defence had no responsibility or involvement in the approval process before the issuing of the invitation by the lead nation.

Sesotho:

Ke a leboha.

The HOUSE CHAIRPERSON (Mr W Horn): The time allocated for questions has expired. The outstanding replies will be printed in the Hansard as they have been received. I request members to stand and wait for the presiding officer and the Mace to leave the Chamber. That concludes the business of the day. The House is adjourned.

The House adjourned at 18:40.