



**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**  
Republic of South Africa

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**“SANDU PROTEST MARCH IS IRRESPONSIBLE AND UNNECESSARY”**

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**PRETORIA:** The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Lindiwe Sisulu has expressed her dismay with the decision by SANDU to abandon the bargaining chamber and other formal platforms of the Department of Defence and hold an unnecessary protest march to the Union Building on August 26, 2009. The Minister added that it is irresponsible and in breach of national security for any in the Defence family to rally people who are responsible for national security to an unnecessary protest march on issues that are being addressed by the Minister and other platforms in the Department of Defence.

The Minister in her Budget Vote Speech and through Departmental officials mandated to negotiate with Unions, showed her commitment to addressing all challenges facing the working soldier and some of the key issues are on the verge of being finalised and implemented.

In her budget vote speech the Minister stated that “like any other defence force around the world the SANDF depends on men and women who have chosen to serve their country and its citizens. We are very proud of these officers who have distinguished themselves in the course of their duties ... The demand for a well trained, multi-skilled, disciplined and well equipped defence force as a critical lever of the developmental agenda of Government is a reality that cannot be left to chance”

She added that “I want to assure the Defence Force staff that their conditions of service are a concern. We are seized with the matter and I would like to engage each one of them through the proper management structures to see how we can attend to these. We are acutely aware that the state of readiness of the SANDF depends primarily on the morale of our soldiers”

“Having assessed our options, we are considering making a request for a separate dispensation for the Department of Defence that would allow us to creatively deal with our own needs and the specificities of our own unique security requirements”.

The Minister called on the Union to return immediately to the bargaining chamber and finalise all the discussions for the benefit of the soldiers.

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