



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS
Republic of South Africa

MEDIA RELEASE

SISULU SHARES PROGRESS WITH DEFENCE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

Cape Town, in what can be described as the longest meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans with seventeen items on the Agenda, the Minister engaged with members of the committee on progress made since she announced her priorities on her Budget vote of July 3, 2009.

The Minister started the meeting by congratulating the Chairperson of the committee. Mr Nyami Boo for meeting with the Department and the Ministry for record twenty times which shows the committees commitment to its work of monitoring and oversight. The Minister called on the Chairperson of Parliament to introduce awards to recognise hard working members of parliament.

The Minister indicated that issues they will not be able to cover would be dealt with during the week as the Department and Armscor will be appearing before the committee on Wednesday and Thursday.

Other issues discussed are as follows:

Amendment of the Defence Act: The Minister briefed the Committee that Cabinet has approved amendments to the Defence Act to allow for the deployment of the Reserve Force during peace time and the a Bill to introduce the National Defence Force Service Commission as the body responsible for all service condition matters in the SANDF. Other amendments were also recommended for consideration by the committee.

Return to the Border of the SANDF: The Minister indicated that troops are already at the border, with more troops joining them everyday and as more troops reach the borders the number of SAPS members will redeploy to focus on crime prevention. She indicated that the SANDF is deploying on the border with Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. She announced that she is meeting with the national and provincial leadership of AGRISA next week Monday to discuss border security and other matters.

Update on the presence of Unions in the SANDF: The Minister indicated that the matter is now for Cabinet approval and the recommendations will then be presented to the Committee and to Parliament. She indicated that the ANC and the Commander in Chief have already expressed their views on the matter.

Interim National Defence Force Service Commission work: The Minister indicated that the Commission continues to attend to important matters of setting up systems for the establishment of the permanent Commission as approved by Cabinet. She said they have delivered to her a single urgent report which consisted of the Bill approved by Cabinet and the recommendation on how salaries within the SANDF can be adjusted to achieve parity with other security institutions in the country. She added that the work of the Commission is on going.

The Minister also condemned the partial and selective release of information by the Democratic Alliance (DA) on the purchase of vehicles for use by the South African National Defence Force. She said the DA unfairly wanted to create an impression that the SANDF has a passion for luxury cars.

She said the SANDF has more than 40 000 vehicles and every day they purchase vehicles for use in their operations. She added that the SANDF has not purchased any vehicles referred to by the DA, but has contacted manufacturers for quotations on a number of vehicles including buses and trucks, and the DA has chosen to omit that fact because it will not be sensational enough to grab media headlines.

She added that it is a sad day when members of Parliament distort information to grab media headlines. "The people who voted us as public representatives expect more than grand standing and sensationalism, the DA can do better, and they continue to disappoint me every day" She said.

The SANDF contacted manufacturers to get quotations for vehicles to be used during the coming soccer world cup, these vehicles would be used for visiting military dignitaries and Presidents that the SANDF has the obligation to offer protection and hospitality. After the World Cup the vehicles will also be used to upgrade the current VIP fleet that is old and aging as part of the normal programme to upgrade transport infrastructure in the SANDF.

The Minister was accompanied by the recently appointed Secretary of Defence, Mrs Mpumi Mpofu, General Matanzima, Chief of Joint Operations, Director General of the Department of Military Veterans, Mr Tsepe Motumi, Chairman of Armscor, Dr Popo Molefe and Acting CEO of ARMSCOR, Siphon Mkhwanazi, advisors and senior managers.

The meeting was cut short to allow for members to attend the memorial service of the late Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Sefularo, the Minister indicated her availability to continue to engage on the remaining issues that includes Defence procurement, progress made with clean audit, scarce skills and many others as indicated in the budget vote speech of July 3, 2009.

“As Minister I stand ready to engage with the committee on all this matters, we are very much happy with progress made in the implementation of Ministerial priorities as detailed in our 2009 budget vote speech, a lot of work has been done and the Defence family must now prepare for full implementation of our programmes in the next coming financial year” She said.

NB: Members of the media attending the SA NAVY 2010 security demonstration in Simon’s Town have until 16:00pm to confirm their attendance through defmedia@mweb.co.za

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