



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS
Republic of South Africa

THE BUDGET SPEECH OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS ON THE OCCASSION OF THE VOTE

The Honourable House Chair,

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Honourable Nosiviwe Maphisa-Nqakula,

The minister has already rendered all the protocol salutations

Honourable members one stands here to essentially support the Department of Defence and Military Veterans budget speech of the honourable Minister, Nosiviwe Maphisa- Nqakula. Twenty-two years into our democracy, those who put on uniform and stood opposed to the racist apartheid regime, and those who equally wore a uniform to support it, have made peace.

They accepted the political instructions of the principals and put their trust in their hands to ensure that the resolution of the centuries old conflict of our country, must birth the future in which our children, and children's children would be proud of.

In this vein, may we always remember that this freedom we enjoy today, came at a great expense to the lives and wellbeing of many who aligned themselves to the military forces that were deeply involved in this conflict.

Some survived, albeit with deep emotional, seen and unseen scars. Some died brutal deaths in that process. At this point may one serve the cause of the memorialisation of our heroes and heroines by dedicating this presentation to the late Comrade Nokuthula Simelane.

Cde Nokuthula Simelane, a young woman died a lonely, brutal and painful death in the hands of her torturers. She was an underground soldier of Umkhonto we Sizwe. She served her cause, the cause of the people of South Africa with distinction, discipline and courage.

She never winched, she never compromised her cause even alone in the hands of the brutal apartheid murderers. She remained steadfast at her post. Today, 22 years into our democracy, her killers are exposed and standing trial in the courts of our new country.

On the other hand, after 22 years many of those who stood to sacrifice limb and life to that struggle for a democratic future, have reached or about to reach pensionable age. The socio economic deficit in their lives, because of their sacrifice for all of us is beginning to tell in the most glaring ways.

In a country whose economy has a historical inclination to serve our white compatriots to the detriment of the mainly African majority, the military veterans, especially those from the liberation forces are increasingly becoming destitute in greater numbers.

Therefore the focus of the Department of Military Veterans must be on the acceleration of service delivery to that vulnerable component of our community, and save our country the shame of having to be viewed as having broken its promise to those who sacrificed for freedom.

We are compelled as the parliament, government society and the corporate world to act according to the spirit of the Constitution of the Republic, "To honour those who suffered and sacrificed for freedom".

In 2014 when one stood before this august house, we outlined the priorities of the DMV in this current administration as the following:

1. Education Support
2. Economic Support
3. Health and Wellness

4. Housing
5. Finalization of the database and
6. Heritage, Memorial, Burial and Honour

Last year we again stood before you to reemphasize the unfolding of a program based on those priorities. We gave also feedback on the challenges we experienced in the process of undertaking that course.

However we stated our will and commitment to remain unfazed by the complex challenges of multilateral cooperation and coordination for some of those identified priorities. In that regard we can report today that while indicating our budget allocation as spelt out by the minister, that we have made progress, although it cannot be enough.

The future of any country should be based on education that serves as the stimuli for development, and to banish ignorance and backwardness. This is precisely because education is not only the great equaliser of people, but it is also the foundation of building and growing the country's inclusive economy.

This reality has not eluded military veterans and their dependents, even when they are faced by hardships. As such we have a good story to tell on the program of education support for military veterans and their beneficiaries.

EDUCATION SUPPORT

In the budget year 2013/2014, only 200 military veterans and their children could secure education support, while during the financial year 2014/2015 about 3650 benefitted. We are proud to announce that as we speak we have a beautiful problem in our hands. We have exponentially increased that number. In this current financial year, we have registered in our education support program 5482 military veterans and their beneficiaries. This is a phenomenal increase of 1832.

Education support has been allocated R26, 4 million.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

We may recall that as it is 22 years into our democracy, those who were youth in their multitudes and swelled the liberation military forces during the anti - apartheid struggle, are now in their middle age or elderly and infirm. Therefore it has been important to prepare access to medical facilities by military veterans. In the financial year 2014/2015, 13923 military veterans were secured access to various medical facilities. In 2015/2016, this number was increased by 743 to sum up to 14666.

Health and Wellness support has been allocated R50 million

HOUSING

Housing has been a challenge because we established that the DMV cannot build houses itself, but must cooperate with other departments, and other spheres of government to attain this task. We are happy and welcome that the Minister of Human Settlements, the Honourable Lindiwe Sisulu, has made a commitment and set targets that we accept. We are at the ready and prepared to cooperate fully in making that undertaking a reality.

Housing budget allocation for this financial year is R138 million

EMPOWERMENT AND STAKE HOLDER MANAGEMENT

Facilitation has been successfully undertaken to create linkages on their behalf with amongst others, Forum Of South African Directors' Generals, Council For Scientific and Industrial Research, Denel, Amcor and SEDA.

Central to the success of this approach has been a serious focus on training. So far 1883 military veterans and their dependents have received SETAs accredited training.

MEMORIALIZATION, HERITAGE, BURIAL SUPPORT AND HONOURING

Our struggle to rid our country and humanity of the scourge of racist apartheid, a crime against humanity, was met with the regime's raw brutality such that havoc was wreaked abroad and in the neighbouring countries.

Those who fought against apartheid died violent and lonely deaths like Nokuthalo Simelane and their remains are dotted hidden in unmarked graves, or blown to pieces in the length and breadth of our country and the neighbouring countries.

DMV has worked closely with the Department of Arts and Culture, and the Missing Persons Task Team under the Department of Justice to find the missing remains of the apartheid death squads victims.

It has also played a very constructively progressive role in the unveiling of the Matola Raid Museum, which serves the purpose to bring closure to the affected families, and ensure the memorialization of the deadly raid by the murderous SADF.

Added to these responsibilities, the DMV also ensures that military veterans are buried with dignity. In this manner we believe that those who served the purpose of bringing about our democracy must be treated with respect even in their last journey to the world of the departed.

The budget allocation of the Empowerment and Stake holder management is R159, 8million

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The process of finalizing the signing of Memorandum of Understanding and the Service Level Agreement between the DMV and the Department of Transport is at an advanced stage. The signing will open an opportunity for subsidised transportation costs for military veterans.

DATABASE

In order to ensure that the military benefits go to bonafide recipients, cleaning the database is an ongoing critical necessity. To succeed in this task, we urge all the military veterans associations to be conscientious in dealing with the DMV on this matter. It is clear that the database verification process would have to be reviewed regularly to ensure its integrity.

SOCIAL RELIEF OF DISTRESS

The DMV has decided to put about 1854 of these worse off veterans on a social relief of distress grant. These are military veterans who do not qualify for any form of special pension or government grants and therefore do not have any income.

Budget allocation for the SRD R16, 8 million.

It should not escape the notice of the house that, with the phenomenal performance reported earlier in some of the benefit areas, and the exponential increase in beneficiary numbers, such as education, the capacity of the DMV to administer benefits has been severely outstretched.

Nonetheless capacity is being addressed through the recruitment of skilled personnel as advertised recently in the Sunday media which honourable members must have seen.

This is in line with, and in support of the Turnaround Strategic Initiative established by the Minister. It has indeed assisted in guiding the DMV out of some of the bottlenecks that it experienced due to its own successes.

Honourable members the total budget of the DMV for the financial year 2016/2017 is R597, 6million. This constitutes an increase of 3% from the previous budget allocation.

Umkonto we Sizwe the military wing of the ANC, the army which Comrade Nokuthula Simelane died with her boots on for our democracy, is commemorating its 55th anniversary this year.

We pray that the heroes and heroines of our country, buried and alive receive the acknowledgement of our society for their bravery and commitment. We have dedicated this budget allocation to Comrade Nokuthula Simelane in our endeavour to raise the utmost need for the recognition of those who under very challenging circumstances fought fearlessly to bring about the Constitution of the Republic.

I support the budget as presented by the Minister.

ENDS