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COMMITTEES RESOLVE TO GIVE IPID MORE TIME TO CONCLUDE INVESTIGATIONS INTO POLICE ACTION DURING LOCKDOWN

PRESS RELEASES

Parliament, Friday, 08 May

2020 – The Portfolio

Committee on Police and the Select Committee on Security and Justice resolved that the Independent Police Investigating Directorate (Ipid)

should be given time to conclude investigations into alleged abuses of power by members of the South African Police Services (Saps) during the enforcement of the State of National Disaster.



“While we welcome the update from Ipid, it was going to be difficult to reach an informed decision on the allegations of abuse of power. We will await the conclusion of the investigations so that we can make resolutions that are backed by facts,” said Ms Shahidabibi Shaikh, the Chairperson of the Select Committee.

Nonetheless, both committees highlighted concerns about the number of cases that have been reported to Ipid. “It is worrying that 376 cases are received in such a short space of time. While we await the finalisation of the investigations, the management of the police must implement mitigating strategies to minimise the number of alleged transgressions,” said Ms Tina Joemat-Pettersson, the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee.

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Both committees have highlighted serious concerns around the alleged death of 10 people as a result of police action during the enforcement of the lockdown. “While we do not want to pre-empt the investigations, we are worried that so many people could die in the course of a humanitarian intervention, which this lockdown is,” Ms Shaikh emphasised.

Furthermore, the committees recommended a closer working relationship between Ipid and the Military Ombud, especially around cases following joint operations.

Meanwhile, the committee is concerned that 253 police officers have been infected with Covid-19. Despite this, the committees acknowledge the systems put in place by Saps management to contain and manage Covid-19, especially considering that the members of the Saps are at the forefront of the fight. The committees have urged the police to continuously monitor their stock levels of personal protective equipment to ensure that they are always fully stocked.

Furthermore, the committees welcome the collaboration between Saps, the Department of Health and Polmed, which ensures the proactive deployment of 300 nurses to conduct screening and testing of members in all police stations and units.

Regarding the release of crime statistics, the committees welcome the announcement that the Minister of Police has initiated the process to release police-recorded crime statistics on a quarterly basis. The release of these statistics quarterly will ensure that Saps are agile in tweaking their crime-fighting strategies to address areas of concern earlier on,” Ms Joemat-Pettersson suggested.

Both committees welcomed the conclusion of an investigation of the arrest of a group of 24 Muslims during which a blasphemous comment was allegedly made. The committees accept the findings of the investigations that the comments were not in reference to Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him).

The committees appreciate the fruitful and frank interactions with the Ministry, management of Saps and Ipid. The committees will

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later today hold a meeting with the Saps on their annual plan 2020/21 and 2020/25 strategic plan.

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON POLICE, MS TINA JOEMAT-PETTERSSON, AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON SECURITY AND JUSTICE, MS SHAHIDABIBI SHAIKH.

For media enquiries or interviews with the Chairpersons, please contact the committees' Media Officer:

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