

**MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**INTERNAL QUESTIONS PAPER NO 23**

**QUESTION NO: 2315**

**DATE: 09 JUNE 2023**

**REPLY RECOMMENDED BY:  
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**

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**Mr W T I Mafanya (EFF) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans [□367]  
[Question submitted for oral reply now placed for written reply because it is in excess of quota (Rule 137(8))]**

What progress has she made to resolve the problems faced by military veterans, which led to some military veterans allegedly taking some of the officials hostage?

**REPLY:**

The Presidential Task Team was established to find solutions and to eliminate blockages that prevents smooth rollout of benefits to the bona fide military veterans. The Then Deputy President, Hon David Mabuza, visited Limpopo, North West, Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape to seek solutions to resolve the challenges of non-delivery and failure to be responsive to Military Veterans needs. The Deputy President has been tasked by the President to chair the PTT that was set up to address the needs of MV's in December 2020.

Seven work-stream were established to advance the service delivery to MV's, namely:

- (a) Legislative Review.
- (b) Organisational redesign.
- (c) Database, verification, cleansing and enhancement.
- (d) Pensions and Benefits.
- (e) Heritage and Memorialisation.
- (f) Communication and
- (g) Socio-Economic support

The progress registered so far to resolve the issues of military veterans is driven through work-streams. The table below lists the types of work-stream, their respective purpose as well as progress they have made to date. There were several meetings held with Military Veterans between January and March 2021 after the consensus document was signed.

The PTT has visited eight of the nine provinces so far, with the exception of Northern Cape. Most of the sub work streams in socio-economic have not been functioning optimally. The PTT has been engaging the Premiers of provinces to better assist the department in improving the delivery of services to Military Veterans. One of the issues that has been agreed upon with the Premiers is to create a coordination mechanism within the offices of the Premiers in order to centralise coordination of Military Veterans issues in the province.

The Military Veterans pension is currently being rolled out by Government Pensions Administration Agency.

The DMV has been delivering on the housing benefit although it is still encountering challenges. The department has recently handed over houses Gauteng and it continues to monitor the delivery of houses across the country.

One of the work streams is the legislative review which meant to develop implementation plans aimed at addressing the policy and legislative issues raised by the Military Veterans. The engagement with Military Veterans around the country has assisted the PTT to better understand challenges faced by Military Veterans which require policy intervention. The department is currently consolidating policy consensus to enable these to be effected into the draft Bill.

Progress is being made with the verification of Military Veterans that were initially excluded from the database. The work stream has already visited Gauteng, Eastern Cape and Limpopo. The PTT will also be considering recommendations from the Database Verification, Cleansing and Enhancement work stream regarding how to deal with the matter of former self defence units and Qibla forces. The PTT, through its intervention, has recommended an appeals process for Military Veterans that are not satisfied with the outcomes of the current verification process.

The Department of Military Veterans is working with the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture on the programme of repatriating remains of the fallen Military Veterans in other countries. A cost effective model for repatriation of remains of fallen heroes and heroines is being considered for the approval. The table 1 below highlights detailed progress on each of the work streams.

Name of the workstream	Purpose of the workstream	Progress
Legislative Review	To develop implementation plans aimed at addressing the policy and legislative issues raised by the Military Veterans.	<p>The Ministerial inputs into the proposed amendments were sourced by the Department in November 2021.</p> <p>Technical advice sought from the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and Government Technical Advisory Centre due to lack of legal personnel in the department since April 2022 to date was that the department must develop a policy consensus document on the issues raised and present to the Ministry for guidance and approval.</p> <p>The policy consensus document was</p>

		<p>submitted to the Ministry in October 2022 but yet to be presented to the Ministry for their guidance and concurrence.</p> <p>The policy consensus document was also presented to the Advisory Council in October 2022.</p> <p>The Ministry will set up a task team with relevant expertise to take this matter forward.</p> <p>The Bill will be submitted to the Cabinet as soon as the task team has advised to initiate the formal process of inviting public comment. From there, the process of forwarding the Bill to Parliament can begin in earnest.</p>
Organization Redesign	To align the DMV structure to its legislative mandate, strategy and business processes.	<p>The Department partnered with National Treasury's Government Technical Advisory Centre to assist with development of the macro-organizational structure following advice from the DPSA and National Treasury that they will come into process when they need to assess and independently advise the department on the work done.</p> <p>GTAC submitted the final report on the updated service delivery model, macro-organizational structure and the costing model on the 31 August 2022 with the intention to develop the micro-organizational design after consulting the Ministry.</p> <p>The Department consulted the Ministry on the 1 November 2022 on guidance on the process before going ahead with the micro-organizational design.</p> <p>The Minister will set up a task team with the relevant skills and capabilities from within the Ministry to take process forward, together with the process of consulting DPSA and NT, until the process is complete within this financial year</p>

Socio Economic Support	To facilitate meaningful interaction with the social cluster and facilitate the identification of short to medium and long term programmes of government to benefit MV's.	<p>This is biggest and the most important workstream and deals with the socio-economic issues of Military Veterans.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that there is a challenge in coordination the work of the workstream due to its complex nature and size.</p> <p>The PTT supported the recommendation that this workstream be broken down into various workstreams that are aligned to the benefits of the department such as education, health, empowerment and housing.</p> <p>Attempts are therefore underway to reconfigure the structure of the work-stream.</p> <p>Furthermore, the role of other spheres government must be clearly clarified and included within the framework of the Intergovernmental relations framework.</p> <p>The protocol agreement to be signed with the provinces will include the role of other spheres of government</p>

<p>Database Verification, cleansing and Enhancement</p>	<p>To develop a project plan for an accelerated completion of the verification process</p>	<p>The verification process was halted for some time after the Limpopo visits due to internal departmental challenges (Contractual matters and logistics).</p> <p>The department still does not have the travel agency. The travel agency issue must still be resolved by the department</p> <p>Major General Mashoala has since accepted (signed) the contract as the Chairperson of the committee commencing from 1st November 2022.</p> <p>Other contracts have been issued to other members of the verification committee. DMV is awaiting for their acceptance of which they will commence with immediate effect upon acceptance of the contracts.</p> <p>The other members are re-installed as per the instruction by the Minister within the National Treasury regulations. DoD must still release the support staff as per the Ministerial directive</p>
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Heritage and memorialization	To facilitate collaborative research of best practices with relevant countries around matters of heritage and memorialization of liberation veterans	<p>The National Policy on the Repatriation of Human Remains and Heritage Objects was adopted by Cabinet on the 16 March 2021.</p> <p>A Repatriation and Restitution Office (RRO) is being established at the South African Heritage Resources Agency to implement the policy. SAHRA has appointed a manager in the RRO to commence duties on 01 November 2022.</p> <p>A Repatriation and Restitution Advisory Committee has been appointed by the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture to develop criteria, monitor its implementation and advise on ethical matters related to the restitution and repatriation of human remains.</p> <p>A consultative workshop held with Military Veterans in December 2022</p>
Pensions and Benefits	To review and update the pension actuarial enquiry undertaken by the DMV in 2014 in order to determine the appropriate Military Veterans quantum in line with inflation.	<p>Military Veterans Pension Policy was approved by the Presidential Task Team on the 26 April 2022.</p> <p>Regulations were tabled in Parliament as required by the Military Veterans Act of 2011</p> <p>GPAA already processing application forms for MVs – 10 000 applications received by GPAA to date</p>

Communications	To ensure that communication and engagement are harnessed effectively throughout the period of the Presidential Task Team.	The work of the communications work-stream is cross-cutting, on-going and continues to monitor and reports on the work of the PTT as it supports the PTT.
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**(T.R. MODISE)**

**MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS: MP**