

Words of Parliament No. 1: "Consequence Management"

A preliminary analysis based on the published records of PMG

The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), Ms Nontobeko Ntsinde was responsible for the first recorded use of the phrase in 2010, when she said that "the requirements of the SITA Act had not always been followed in relation to debtors or the 30-day payment clause. However, SITA was moving towards **consequence management**, to ensure compliance and break entrenched patterns."¹

This statement was in response to a question by Ms Faith Bikani MP (ANC) at a meeting of the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.

The phrase "consequence management" was not recorded in Parliament at all in 2011, but in 2012 another single use came, from the comments of the now-disgraced National Commissioner of the South African Police Service, General Riah Phiyega.

PMG records that General Phiyega told the PC on Police "that the meeting had been a most sobering experience, but she was thankful for what had come out, as it could otherwise have taken her many months to understand the extent of the challenges that SAPS was facing. ... SAPS management needed to reassess the many issues it was facing, including Standard Operation Procedures... She would present later on progress on the plans, and would also address **consequence management**."

"The Chairperson confirmed that the Committee would support an audit, provided that it ... involved the Auditor-General, and an investigation report must be submitted as soon as it was compiled. SAPS management was not all new. The Committee needed to know who it could hold responsible."² [Not General Phiyega – Marikana was nobody's fault!]

"Consequence management" featured 17 times in 2013 and 29 times in 2014. Then its use took off like an epidemic:

All Years	"CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT"
2020	5
2019	386
2018	400
2017	298
2016	175
2015	103
2014	29
2013	17
2012	1
2011	0
2010	1
"CONSEQUENCE MANAGEMENT"	1415 matches

This was after the new phrase was defined clearly in 2013.

Appropriately, the definition of consequence management came from the Auditor General South Africa:

"Action against transgressors (consequence management)"³

This was in a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements on the Audit of Predetermined Objectives of the Department. The AG continued to use the phrase in presentations to other committees through 2013.

The first Member to use the phrase "consequence management" was Mr Lennit Max MP (at that time a member of the Democratic Alliance) on 15 October 2013. This was at a meeting of the PC on Correctional Services which involved "intensive interrogation of the DCS' Annual Report 2012/13" In PMG's report:

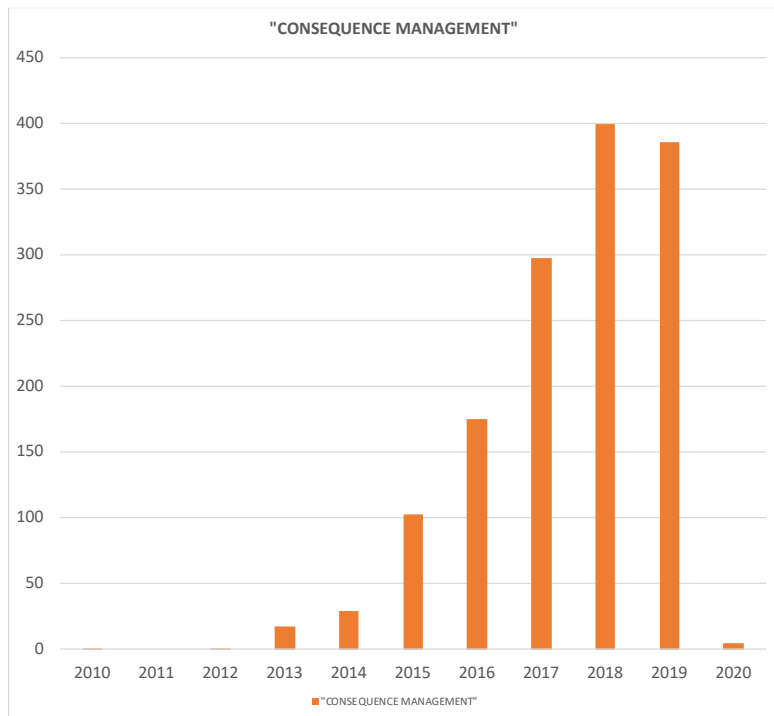
¹ 31-Aug-2010 <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/11954/>

² 19-Jun-12 <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/14568/>

³ 26-Mar-2013 <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/15631/>

“Mr Max referred to consequence management and performance bonuses. There were 68 disciplinary fraud and corruption cases, of which four had been closed and the rest finalised. There were 50 final written warnings and 14 suspensions. There were eight verbal warnings. Those were for people guilty of fraud and corruption. Final written warnings could only fail.” Previously Mr Max had asked: “...why there were no consequences for management. In three years no one had been dismissed for not complying.”⁴

“Consequence management” – from being a phrase virtually unused in the 4th Parliament, became a signature phrase of the 5th Parliament between 2014 and 2019!



At the end of the 5th Parliament, “consequence management” found a place in the President’s February 2019 State of the Nation Address.

In addition to introducing a suite of compulsory courses, covering areas like ethics and anti-corruption to the National School of Government, the President said that Section 8 of the Public Administration and Management Act, “will see the imposition of harsher penalties, including fines and/or prison sentences for officials that transgress.”

“The Ethics, Integrity and Disciplinary Technical Assistance Unit will be established to strengthen management of ethics and anti-corruption and ensure **consequence management** for breaches of government processes.”⁵

The associated phrase "lack of consequence management" was recorded 80 times between 2014 and 2019. This included use in 44 Committee Meetings and in 30 Tabled Committee Reports.

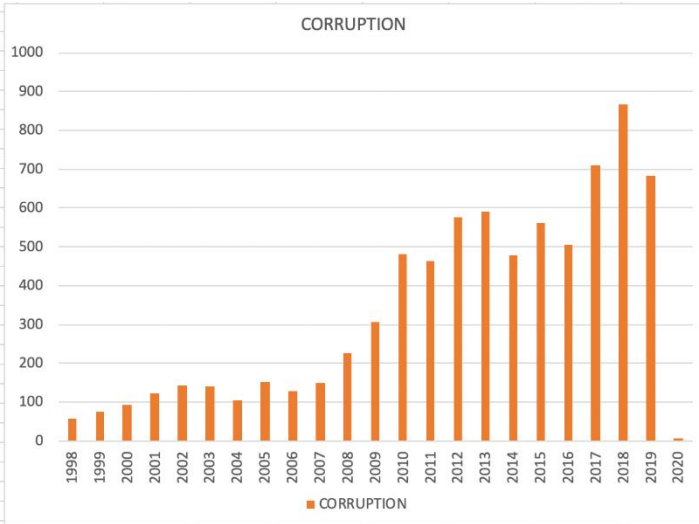
In the restrained words of PMG monitors:

- ...The challenge of lack of consequence management was raised sharply by the Committee ...
- ...the Committee expressed a concern about the lack of consequence management against officials contravening ...
- ...noted with great concern the lack of consequence management and disciplinary action per recommendations ...

Appendix: OK ‘corruption’ is more

⁴ 15-Oct-2013 <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/16564/>
⁵ 7-Feb-2019 <https://pmg.org.za/briefing/27833/> This unit is headed by Mr Robert McBride.

All Years	CORRUPTION
2020	7
2019	682
2018	867
2017	710
2016	506
2015	562
2014	478
2013	592
2012	577
2011	464
2010	482
2009	305
2008	227
2007	149
2006	127
2005	153
2004	105
2003	139
2002	142
2001	122
2000	93
1999	75
1998	58
CORRUPTION	7622 matches



Compiled by Dr Martin Nicol, former Parliamentary researcher for the Portfolio Committee on Mineral Resources during the Fifth Parliament