

SAPS transgressions no surprise when Rambo leads them

Okkie Terblanche MP – DA Shadow Deputy Minister of Police

Honorable Chairperson, Honorable Members and fellow South Africans

The emergence of the Covid-19 virus in our country compelled Government to take urgent action to respond to this inevitable health pandemic.

The President declared a National State of Disaster on 15 March 2020 and the Minister of Finance followed with a Supplementary Budget to fund Government's revised strategy.

We are gathered here today to debate the South African Police Service's proposed amendments to their 2020/21 Annual performance- (APPs) and 2020-25 Strategic Plans as well as their amended 2020/21 Annual performance plans.

Chairperson, the police is a very important department, a fact that is underlined by the way it was treated during this exercise. It is one out of only seven budget votes that were revised upwards. An additional allocation of R3.7 billion was added to their budget and I for one would have loved to support it without hesitation.

Unfortunately, looking at the detail and more specifically what is happening on the ground, leaves me with no other option but to strongly object to this revised budget - yet another example of the incapable State.

Chairperson, charity begins at home. All peace-minded South Africans certainly expected that all possible precautionary measures would have been taken to provide police officials with adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). This is of utmost importance to ensure their protection while they are putting their lives on the line to protect others.

On 10 July 2020, the Minister of Police announced on a virtual platform that more than 5 000 security personnel have been infected with the Covid-19 virus and 36 lost their lives. Various police stations are closing daily, due to infections.

This situation is a clear indication that the police are failing their own members, let alone the community they are supposed to protect. The police are interacting with the public on a daily basis at roadblocks, vehicle checkpoints, etc. Now, if police officials are not properly protected against infections themselves and not always observing basic safety protocols, we are running a real risk that the police themselves may even contribute to the spreading of the virus.

A guiding principle for most police services around the world is to "Protect and Serve" their respective communities. South Africans, however, are experiencing an unprecedented increase in violence by the security forces during their enforcement of Covid-19 quarantine regulations.

Chairperson, the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) tabled the following shocking statistics on 10 July 2020 during their adjusted budget presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Police.

The total case intake by IPID during Lockdown are a whopping 1 647 cases. The breakdown is as follows:

- Assault – 1 180 cases;
- Discharge of official firearm(s) – 242 cases;

- Death as a result of police action – 76 cases;
- Death in police custody – 44 cases

Of these cases, 645 relate directly to Covid-19:

- Assault – 499 cases;
- Discharge of official firearm(s) – 116 cases;
- Corruption – 13 cases;
- Death as a result of police action – 11 cases

Chairperson, the afore mentioned is definitely not the result of a police service living the principle to “Protect and Serve”, but rather the waging of a war against citizens of this country, who are on their way to buy food or medication, walking their dogs, exercising, etc.

Chairperson, I am not surprised at all, because this department is led by a Minister behaving like Rambo. A man who told police officials to destroy stores selling liquor. A self-made General, who promotes the enforcement of the law by brutal force instead of executing the law with empathy.

Another product of the incapable State.

Voorsitter, Suid-Afrika is geregtig op beter. Die blote voortdurende toename van begrotings koop nie noodwendig vir ons beter polisiëring nie.

Daadwerklike aksie is dringend nodig om die polisie te hervorm tot 'n professionele, effektiewe, misdaadvoorkomings organisaie, wat die veiligheid van alle Suid-Afrikaners sal verseker.

Wat 'n omgewing sal skep waar ons vrouens en kinders weer veilig kan rondbeweeg en mense op plase hulle kan toespits op die verbouing van voedsel om die nasie te voed.

Voorsitter, hierdie voorgestelde begroting bring ons nie nader aan die bereiking van hierdie ideaal nie.

Die DA ondersteun níe die begroting nie.