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Dear President Ramaphosa

In your State of the Nation Address to the sixth parliament you emphasized your commitment to decisively tackle the issue of Gender Based Violence.

The Democratic Alliance supports all efforts to fight the scourge of Gender Based Violence and we have committed ourselves to exposing the shortcomings of the state and your government while also proposing solutions.

Last year I exposed the catastrophic shortage of rape kits at police stations across the country and now I bring another critical issue which affects the evidence collection chain to your attention for your urgent intervention.

The third quarter performance report presented to the police portfolio committee earlier this year by the South African Police Service (SAPS) for the financial year 2019/20 revealed that by the third quarter SAPS had only finalised 62% of case exhibits within the required 90 day period. The processing of DNA case exhibits is measured against a target which requires 80% of all case exhibits to be finalised within 90 days.

This 62% amounts to only 27 801 out of 44 253 case exhibits processed within 90 days which means that by the end of the third quarter 16 452 were not processed timeously. I am reliably informed that the situation has not improved and that the backlog has increased dramatically since the third quarter.

I am also reliably informed that there is now a critical shortage of reagent at our laboratories. Reagent is required to perform DNA testing and as a consequence of the shortage the backlog of DNA case exhibits is growing every day.

It is estimated that the backlog has increased by tens of thousands since the SAPS third quarter report was presented to the portfolio committee. This means that tens of thousands of victims of Gender Based Violence are being denied justice making your commitment to tackle this scourge nothing more than an empty promise.

I appeal to you for your urgent intervention so that the victims of Gender Based Violence may receive the justice they deserve.

Sincerely

Andrew Whitfield, MP