



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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Minister of Defence and Military Veterans

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Min Thandi Modise

Heavy calibre hit of SAF Oryx in eastern DRC and KIA of the flight engineer

Minister, my WhatsApp messages to you refers.

It has come to my attention yesterday that 1 of our Oryx helicopters in the eastern DRC was hit by a heavy calibre shot, heavily wounded the commander and killing the flight engineer. This is a very sad incident despite the reality that they were doing service in a war-torn eastern DRC as part of the MONUSCO forces.

I recall many briefings, and even parliamentary committee discussions, of a policy or standing order, that our Oryx helicopters must always fly in pairs especially in the high-risk area from Goma northwards to Beni and North-Kivu, and that they be escorted by 2 Rooivalk helicopters when the risk has increased for possible attacks. It seems this policy or standing order was ignored and that this Oryx was flying without any air support.

Can I please request you to urgently provide me with more information and to urgently brief the JSCD on this incident? Why this helicopter was not accompanied by another Oryx, and why was there no Rooivalk escort? Has anyone knowingly ignored the policy and/or standing order of them flying in pairs and be escorted by Rooivalk helicopters? If so will anyone be held accountable? What are the facts?

This is the opportune time to reconsider our involvement with the MONUSCO forces in the DRC, and especially the withdrawal of both our Oryx and Rooivalk helicopters. This should be done given the enormous shortcomings in our resources, specifically our air-defence and air-support capabilities in South Africa to protect our land borders and maritime territories, and our deployed soldiers in Cabo Delgado.

We are in this as a collective team and we should work together in the best of all South Africans and our deteriorating defence force.

Your urgent attention and favourable consideration of this sincere request will be highly appreciated. I will eagerly await your prompt response.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kobus Marais', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kobus Marais MP

DA Shadow Minister for Defence and Military Veterans

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