



ELEANORE BOUW-SPIES, MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE

13 January 2025

Hon. Jan Naudé de Villiers

Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Service and Administration

Per e-mail jdevilliers@parliament.gov.za mzibeko@parliament.gov.za

Dear Chairperson,

RE: URGENT REQUEST FOR MINISTERIAL ACCOUNTABILITY SESSION ON LIFESTYLE AUDIT FAILURES

The Democratic Alliance (DA) hereby requests that the Portfolio Committee on Public Service and Administration summon the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Hon. Mzamo Buthelezi, to account for the Department's failure to refer a single lifestyle audit case to law enforcement agencies, considering that 141 officials with suspicious financial conduct have been identified.

The Minister's recent parliamentary reply revealed 8,982 senior officials underwent lifestyle audits. We are deeply concerned that zero cases have been referred to the Hawks, Special Investigating Unit, or any external law enforcement agency – although 117 lifestyle audits are under internal investigation and 24 have been flagged by the Presidency for suspected undeclared income or hidden assets.

We specifically request that the Minister be called to address:

1. A departmental breakdown of where the 141 flagged officials are employed along with the monetary value of undeclared assets identified;

2. Written protocols and policies which govern, specifically when, lifestyle audit findings must be referred to external law enforcement agencies, and whether such protocol exists at all;
3. Timeline and status for the 117 “internal investigations”: when these investigations were initiated, what the expected completion date is, and what oversight mechanisms are in place to monitor progress;
4. Preventative measures that have and are being implemented to ensure that officials under investigation for undeclared assets cannot influence the investigation process or access to sensitive procurement decisions while investigations are pending;
5. Public reporting framework – what mechanisms exist for transparent reporting on lifestyle audit outcomes to Parliament and the public, beyond responding to parliamentary questions.

The Committee has previously warned that departments failing to conduct annual lifestyle audits should face consequences. However, we are now seeing that even when audits reveal wrongdoing, there are still no consequences. This renders the entire exercise an expensive façade of accountability rather than genuine corruption detection.

With R3.9 billion lost annually to ghost workers and now 141 officials identified with financial irregularities facing no prosecution, the PSA Department’s approach amounts to managing corruption behind closed doors instead of enforcing the law. South Africans cannot continue to pay for corruption-detection processes that expose wrongdoing but deliver no accountability.

We request that this accountability session be scheduled urgently, considering the public interest in ensuring that lifestyle audits translate into actual consequence management rather than remaining an expensive paper exercise.

Yours Sincerely,

ELEANORE BOUW-SPIES, MP