

28 May 2026

**Hon. Kgomotso Ramolobeng**

Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

Cape Town

Dear Hon. Chairperson Ramolobeng,

**REQUEST FOR AN URGENT SITTING AND FULL PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS AND PAROLE SUPERVISION SYSTEM**

I write to request that the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services urgently convene an emergency sitting to consider the deeply alarming reports that almost 28,000 parolees have absconded and cannot be traced by the Department of Correctional Services.

This is not a minor administrative failure but a serious public safety risk. Among these absconded parolees are offenders convicted of serious and violent crimes, including murder, rape, aggravated robbery and kidnapping. Every day that they remain untraced is another day on which South African communities are placed at unacceptable risk.

The Portfolio Committee must now exercise its oversight role fully and without delay.

The Democratic Alliance has been raising the alarm about the failures in South Africa's parole and community corrections system for years. We did so long before the current Minister took office, and we have continued to do so since Minister Pieter Groenewald assumed responsibility for the Department. Yet, despite repeated warnings, little appears to have changed.

South Africans cannot be asked to accept a parole system that loses track of tens of thousands of offenders and then offers no urgent, credible plan to find them.

I therefore request that the Committee urgently convene a special meeting and summon the Minister of Correctional Services and the National Commissioner of Correctional Services to account to Parliament on this matter.

At this emergency sitting, the Minister and the Department must be required to provide a full written and oral report dealing with, at minimum, the following questions:

1. How many parolees have absconded, broken down by province, region, correctional centre, parole office and year of abscondment?

2. How long each parolee has been untraceable, including a breakdown of those who have been absconded for more than six months, one year, five years, ten years, and longer.
3. How many have absconded since the new Minister of Correctional Services took office?
4. The original offences for which these parolees were convicted, including a full breakdown of those convicted of murder, rape, attempted murder, kidnapping, aggravated robbery, sexual offences, and other violent crimes.
5. What steps have been taken to trace each absconded parolee, including whether warrants were issued, whether cases were opened with SAPS, whether the SAPS Criminal Record Centre was notified, and what follow-up action was taken.
6. How many absconded parolees have since been arrested for further offences, including the nature of those offences and whether the Department was aware at the time that they were parole absconders.
7. Why the systems of the Department of Correctional Services and SAPS are still not properly integrated, and what immediate steps will be taken to ensure that an absconded parolee is flagged the moment they come into contact with the criminal justice system.
8. What happened to tracking and tracing capacity within the Department, including whether dedicated tracking and tracing units were discontinued, why this occurred, and whether they will now be reinstated.
9. What progress has been made on electronic monitoring, including GPS-enabled monitoring of high-risk and violent parolees, and why this technology has not yet been implemented at scale.
10. What disciplinary steps have been taken against officials who failed to follow required procedures when parolees absconded.
11. What emergency plan the Department will implement immediately to locate and return absconded violent offenders to the correctional system.

The Committee should further resolve to conduct a full parliamentary review of the Community Corrections System, including parole supervision, probation monitoring, electronic monitoring, parole board decision-making, SAPS-DCS coordination, and the operational capacity of parole monitors.

This review must not become another slow bureaucratic exercise. Parliament must insist on an urgent action plan from the Department, including timeframes for tracing absconded parolees, implementing GPS-enabled electronic monitoring, improving data integration with SAPS, and ensuring that violent offenders released on parole are subject to real supervision.

This crisis also points to a much deeper failure across the criminal justice chain. South Africans are being failed at every stage. Investigations are too often weak or incomplete, our criminal courts take far too long to finalise matters and correctional facilities are overcrowded.

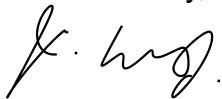
And now parole decisions raise serious questions.

South Africans deserve a criminal justice system that protects them. They deserve a correctional services system that corrects, supervises and accounts. And they deserve a Parliament that takes its oversight responsibility seriously when public safety is at stake.

I therefore respectfully request that the Committee urgently schedule an emergency meeting on this matter and initiate a full review of the Community Corrections and parole supervision system.

I look forward to your urgent response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Engelbrecht', written in a cursive style.

**Janho Engelbrecht MP**

Democratic Alliance

Member of the Portfolio Committee on Correctional Services