THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE WITHDRAWS FROM THE VAAL RIVER INTERVENTION PROJECT

As from 31 January 2020, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) will be withdrawing its personnel and equipment that were deployed in the Vaal River Project to clean up the Vaal River System which commenced on 31 October 2018 to be completed on 31 October 2019 but was further extended to 31 January 2020.

Various SA Army Engineer units and regiments under the stewardship of the SA Army Engineer Formation Headquarters commanded by Colonel Andries Mahapa contributed members and equipment to attain the Vaal River Project objectives as set out by the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans in the beginning of the project. Over five hundred members from the SANDF regular and reserve units took part in this project on a rotational basis providing range of engineering skills.

An assessment by the Intervention Team in October 2018 indicated that in order for the treatment plan to be fully operational, the SANDF engineers were required to desludge and clear the Primary Settling Tank in the settlement chamber and humus tanks, repair a desludging pipe in the settlement chamber, unblock sewer lines and manholes, paint a rotational bridge that is linked to the primary settling tank, and to unblock community houses where sewage was coming from, and lastly, maintain and or reinforce a security wall around a treatment plan.

Informed specialists in the field of engineering have commended the SANDF for its demonstrable progress in this deployment which served as a launching pad for authorities to appoint a government entity specialising in wastewater treatment to take over and build on a sterling job which has resulted in the increase of waste water flow to reach a treatment plant.

The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans would like to extend her gratitude to all SANDF members who were deployed and contributed their selfless services in the attainment of objectives of this project. During the term of deployment, the SANDF managed to unblock a sewage system that was clogged up resulting to spillage, and to date, a total of seven pump stations are now operational with another 24 pump stations functioning but still requiring some attention.

Ends.

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