



**the sandf**

Department:  
Defence  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**INTRODUCTION TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON BUDGET VOTE  
22: DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**

**HON NOSIVIWE MAPISA-NQAKULA  
SOUTH AFRICA'S MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS**

**23 MAY 2013, OLD ASSEMBLY CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT OF RSA, CAPE  
TOWN**

Chairperson

Deputy Minister, Thabang Makwetla

Fellow Cabinet Colleagues

Chairpersons of Committees

Honourable Members

Secretary of Defence

Chief of the SANDF and the Military Command

Our soldiers watching from the bases

Our honoured Guests

We welcome the opportunity to introduce the first Budget Vote debate since my appointment as Minister of Defence and Military Veterans.

We dedicate this occasion of our Budget Vote to the women and men, members of our armed forces who lost their lives in the service of our country during the previous year. May their souls rest in peace, while the memory of their love for their country, should never be lost to us.

Chairperson,

The Budget Vote debate of the Department takes place against a backdrop of this ongoing public discourse on various matters within the defence and security environment.

Whatever the differences in public opinion on these matters, the discourse has created a rare opportunity for our country, the Ministry and the SANDF, to pay urgent attention to some of the weaknesses that gave rise to such challenges.

I must say, however that given the rapid nature of developments in our environment in the past two months, the country, including all of us here, has had very little time, to give due appreciation to the sterling work done on a daily basis by members of the SANDF, in ensuring the security and sovereignty of our country.

That despite the recent incidences, that are in the public domain, our men and women in uniform, continue to display selfless and loyal determination in executing the various tasks in service of this great nation.

While some of us have resigned to the despondence and gloom of the moment, the continued selfless dedication and sacrifice of our soldiers should be celebrated and, on an occasion such as this, we should not miss the opportunity to let them know the extent of our indebtedness to them.

The DOD is a unique organisation populated by a special calibre of South Africans, soldiers and civilians alike, who have elected to put their lives on the line, so that we and future generations, can live in conditions of peace. Each one of them is an everyday hero. The country should not be ashamed to associate itself, and show pride in their heroism, even during times of challenges and despondency.

Honourable Members,

Ms Sussete Gates sits in the public gallery as our invited guest. She, herself is not a soldier, but a civilian who works in our Finance Management Division.

She is in her mid-forties, she is a white South African, she was deployed as the financial officer of our Mission to the C.A.R.

When she and the other contingent of civilians became aware of the imminent attack by the rebels they vacated their accommodation and were relocated to a safer place. During this rush, she had to leave behind the cash contingency supporting the mission amounting to millions of Rands. She knew that should the money be discovered it would fall in the wrong hands and be used to fund rebel activity. At the height of the battle she returned to the base to fetch the money and accounting documents at great risk to her life.

She was confronted by the rebels who wanted to take the bags in which she hid the money. She managed to convince them that

she was carrying clothes and hitch hiked with French troops to the airport. She brought back into South Africa the total amount of 3 million rand in foreign currency.

Another of her colleagues, Corporal Nkoana, who is also here showed bravery that goes beyond the call of duty in Bangui.

During the heat of battle, she volunteered to go out and assist with casualties sustained in the field. Whilst returning to the base the convoy was ambushed by Seleka rebels. Without vehicles and maps to guide them to base, 16 members were cut off from their company and realised that their hiding place was surrounded by rebels. They were behind enemy lines. Corporal Nkoana, a medic, took the lead and decided on the best way out of a potential ambush situation. For two long days and nights, they moved under her command and guidance, carrying casualties of war. She kept the commanders informed of their position and situation at all times. Her actions saved all 16 of our soldiers including two who were shot.

She has earned the nickname of “human navigator” for her role in guiding her colleagues during the escape.

Ms Gates and Corporal Nkoana represent all the finest qualities of the new SANDF, they are heroines and true patriots, who displayed loyalty to their country and fellow servicemen and women, three of whom are also in this House with us today.

Chairperson,

The challenges that we have debated in public and in this House regarding our defence and security environment have brought forth many lessons and pointed to key interventions that need to be made.

In particular, these challenges were starkly exposed following our mission to Bangui, the accidents in our aviation environment and the recent unauthorised use of the Waterkloof Airforce Base for private purposes.

In the aftermath of these events, the department has had to conduct deep introspection and review, the result of which will have serious implications for the work and organisation of our armed forces, particularly during this financial year.

The finalisation of the Defence Review has already taken into account some of the weaknesses in our design, tactical planning, legislation and operational requirements that led to these challenges.

The CSANDF and the Military Command Council have also conducted an assessment of some of these weaknesses and determined the interventions that need to be made in the immediate, short term and long term planning.

The lessons drawn, in particular in relation to the CAR, are already assisting us in the planning, force preparation, and deployment to current and future operations.

Following the report of the Directors-General on the investigation of the use of the Waterkloof Airforce Base for private purpose, the SANDF is conducting a review aimed at strengthening weaknesses identified in command and control, policy and delegations, as well as the standard operating procedure governing the use and access to all our facilities.

Although the public has, and will continue to have access to various of our facilities, including Military Bases, these need to be regulated in accordance with the required level of sensitivity and security.

Chairperson and Honourable Members,

The DOD and the SANDF will continue to do their work in pursuance of constitutionally mandated obligations.

Given the current gaps that exist in relation to funding, structures, human resources and capability, the SANDF is developing a fully integrated approach to the defence of the RSA, our international obligations and its ordered tasks.

This process, informed and aligned to the current defence review process, involves a zero based approach to the needs of the SANDF, against its current resourcing gaps.

South Africa's national interest is always central to the fulfilment of the defence mandate.

Our continent has enough resources that can be shared for common prosperity, security and human development. The biggest threat to the ability of the continent to harness this potential, is instability, poor governance and war. The situation of war has made it possible for our resources to be plundered for the benefit of other economies outside the continent. The continued plundering of these resources is a direct threat to our future food security and survival. It is for this reason, that we will continue our engagements in support of peace and stability in the continent.

South Africa has consistently adhered to its pledges to MONUSCO with the deployment of its various capabilities in support of the mission in the Eastern DRC. We have also pledged to contribute a battalion to the envisaged intervention force that is being established.

As part of our support to the region's maritime security, we have also renewed our mandate for Operation Copper in the Mozambican Channel to deter piracy activities, and ensure the security of our exclusive economic zone.

These operations will continue in this financial year with an amount of R585 million allocated for the SADC Maritime Security Strategy.

**Fellow Honourable members,**

The Defence Review has been completed and submitted for Cabinet's approval. Although I do not wish to pre-empt the final outlook of the Defence Review Report after its consideration by

Cabinet, I need to indicate that we are preparing to align our planning activities to accommodate the implementation of its recommendations. This may require that some reprioritisation and adjustment be made to both our plans and financial projections for this year.

We need more frequent reviews to respond to the pace of technological advances within the military sphere and ever changing geo-political environments going forward.

I wish to thank members of the Defence Review Committee who were ably led by the Chairman Roelf Meyer on their sterling work.

Honourable Members,

An important part of ensuring the sustainability of the SANDF and its capabilities is the need for us to take care of the defence force's most important asset, our soldiers.

Key in this effort, is the need to ensure that the conditions of service for our soldiers are improved in recognition of the special nature of service they provide.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the remuneration structure for the members of the permanent Defence Force Service Commission has been finalised and submitted to Cabinet. Once approved, the appointment of permanent members can proceed in June 2013.

I would like to thank the members of the Interim Commission, some of whom are members of Parliament, for their service over the past four years.

Chairperson,

Given the strategic impact of defence on national security, it has become important that an effective grievance procedure, which enjoys the confidence of soldiers, is developed and implemented.

In May 2012, the first Military Ombud was appointed to establish a mechanism to investigate and resolve complaints of members.

I recently instructed the Military Ombud, in terms of the Act, to conduct an investigation into the allegations of abuse and assault of recruits at the Oudtshoorn Infantry School. I have since received the initial report and directed the CSANDF to implement its recommendations.

Honourable Members I want to emphasise, that the pursuit for a well-balanced and disciplined force is absolute and essential for the success of the defence force.

The military is expected to develop capable leaders with a high level of discipline and sense of duty.

The defence force actively recruits young people through the Military Skills Development System (MSDS) and University Reserve Training Programme.

We seek to increase partnerships with tertiary institutions to train defence force members and recruit talented students, especially in technical fields. Recently we have concluded a training contract for our members with the Russian Federation, as part of our efforts to expand our international training partnership. This will cover some of the essential skills, particularly the training of our pilots.

After consultation with the Department of Public Works, the DOD has now established a Works Formation responsible for the execution of planned departmental maintenance projects.

Chairperson,

The SANDF has so far deployed its members in four provinces as part of its border security operations. The deployment along the border has contributed significantly to Government's efforts of combating crime.

I am concerned that despite expressed commitment to improve the landward defence capability, and despite funds being allocated in the past, very little progress has been made. This year, we have ensured that decisions on key projects are finalised and we are currently at contracting stages for the acquisition of various landward defence capabilities.

Members must remember that, just before the dawn of democracy many of our capabilities were sold off into private hands, resulting in some of the capability gaps we have today. The current

government has now inherited the responsibility to correct this gap, while those responsible for it shout from the sidelines.

We are confident, however that during this financial year, the process of consolidation of the needs of the services, as led by the CSANDF will address the sustainability of our capability.

In November 2011, Cabinet approved the acquisition of VVIP aircraft. We have since consulted with National Treasury and funding has now been approved for the acquisition of this capability in this financial year.

Chairperson,

The Defence Budget Vote for the 2013/14 financial year amounts to R40,243 billion. This is equal to 1,1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 3,8% of total government expenditure.

Honourable members and colleagues,

The support for a viable and competitive defence industry is an integral part of our mandate. It is a matter of concern that over the years South Africa is gradually losing its influential position as one of the industry leaders in defence innovation. It is for this reason that the department must play a direct role in the restructuring of the defence industry to ensure that it focuses primarily on the requirements of the SANDF.

We will continue to give attention to Government's commitment to improve the lives of our military veterans. As part of this, I have

decided to appoint an intervention support team to assist the DMV in creating the systems required to effectively roll out the socio-economic benefits for our veterans. These systems are urgently required given the fact that an amount of R300 million has been provided for socio-economic benefits for this financial year. The Deputy Minister will elaborate further on matters affecting military veterans.

Let me assure Honourable Members and fellow South Africans that despite the challenges of the moment, we will never allow our defence capabilities so essential to the protection of our country to be eroded. In order to achieve this we need the support of all South Africans including those sitting in this House.

We do so informed by the conviction which we all share that the defence force is our national asset and should be protected.

I thank you.