Description: cid:image001.jpg@01CBED4D.63B6F330

**MEDIA STATEMENT ON THE MASS ESCAPE OF OFFENDERS AT MALMESBURY REMAND DETENTION FACILITY.**

Allow me to welcome members of the media who are present and thank them for availing themselves for this briefing.

The Department of Correctional Services confirms an incident at Malmesbury Remand Detention Facility, where 69 Remand Detainees escaped after overpowering officials during exercise at approximately 12h15 on 24 July 2020.

Of the 69 escapees, 66 have been rearrested and I would like to congratulate the Department of Correctional Services Officials, the South African Police Service and the local armed response for their swift response in ensuring that the majority of the escapees were arrested.

As of now 3 Remand Detainees are still at large. The Department’s Emergency Support Team and the South African Police Service are working around the clock to arrest them.

The incident happened at about 12h15 when officials were providing exercise to inmates. At the time the centre had 451 offenders and 20 officials on duty.

The escapees overpowered officials, took the keys and locked 3 of them in a cell and opened other cells before escaping through the main entrance and over the roof. During the incident 9 officials sustained minor injuries and bruises.

The Department would want to condemn this reckless action by these offenders and would make sure that they are punished for their actions.

The situation currently has been stabilized at the facility and the Emergency Support Team has been activated to monitor the situation. Furthermore some of the problematic inmates have been transferred out of the facility to the Maximum Facilities in the Region.

The centre is currently under lockdown in order to ensure stability.

We want to assure communities that we will do everything in our power to apprehend the remaining escapees and would not do anything to put communities at risk.

The Regional Commissioner has appointed a team to investigate the incident and I am appealing to everyone to allow us time to establish the facts, finalise the investigation and not listen to unfounded rumours.

END