

Media Statement  
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For immediate use

## SECURITY OPERATIONS TO REMAIN IN FORCE

Suspension of visits during the nationwide lockdown period has not only assisted the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) to prevent transmission of COVID-19 in its 243 facilities, but has also averted contrabands from entering our centres.

This came as a result of security operations aimed at removing contrabands from all cells in our centres thus leading to extreme levels of secular suffocation. Albeit to threats of violence by a few individuals purporting to be representing the interest of offenders, correctional services is more than determined to clean and remove all forms of contrabands in its centres. This has been a subtle bone of contention thus leading to the perpetuation of chaos in some of our centres. Such chaos is then disguised as a coronavirus scare and a protest over lack of preventative measures.

What remains fundamental is that a push by offenders to undermine the State is something that can never be tolerated. Hence an internal investigation is underway into the burning of few mattresses at Krugersdorp, Worcester and Leeuwkop Correctional Centres. Unruly behaviour will result in consequences. Burning of State property is a criminal offence and we will leave no stone unturned in making sure that all those involved in such acts of criminality are brought to book and the law takes its course.

The National Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Arthur Fraser, stated that “no amount of irritation can propel someone to destroy State property worth thousands of rands funded by the taxpayer, and put the lives of other offenders and correctional officials at risk. This is a clear act of hooliganism and shall never be tolerated by this Department.”

The possession and use of mobile phones and other gadgets by offenders are of serious concern and such items are going to be confiscated and removed from centres, rapidly. The limited movement has meant that the security officials are able to conduct targeted searching exercises. As a result, confiscated items have little room to find their way back into the cells.

These operations have also made it possible to identify areas where unscrupulous officials have a direct hand in the smuggling of contrabands and the net is closing on them. We will not hesitate to take action against rogue elements in the department who collude with offenders to undermine security in our Centres by enabling contrabands to be smuggled. To date, several investigations are underway to attend to officials who have been implicated in these rogue activities.

What has to be clarified is that the noble profession of corrections has no

place for criminal behaviour. Correctional Services has a duty to fight corruption with vigour. We are part of the States criminal justice machinery which uproots criminal behaviour in society, to the extent that criminal behaviour finds expression amongst those who taint our standing and reputation in society will ensure that they too are confined to an extensive rehabilitation regime.

We strongly reiterate our initial statement, the incitement of offenders is a reckless and very harmful exercise. As the Department, we are committed to transparency, and accountability, with that said, there are processes and procedures in place for offenders to raise their concerns within correctional centres, and these shall be followed at all times. The Department is resolute on its operations to clean-up and remove contrabands from correctional facilities around the country.

National Commissioner, Mr Fraser, has assured South Africans that Correctional Services remains committed on its mandate of ensuring safe and secure custody for offenders in all correctional centres in the country. "Offenders who flout internal rules and regulations will continue to face internal disciplinary processes in line with relevant sections of the Correctional Services Act," said Mr Fraser.

The Department will continue to monitor the behaviour of offenders and uproot any elements that may undermine safe and humane conditions as prescribed by the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998.

Ends.

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