



MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY DEPUTY MINISTER NKOSI PHATHEKILE HOLOMISA (AH!
DILIZ'INTABA) MP, ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES BUDGET VOTE**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, CAPE TOWN, 20 MAY 2021

Honourable House Chairperson,

Minister of Justice and Correctional Services, Ronald Ozzy Lamola,

Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, John Jeffery,

Ministers and Deputy Ministers from sister Departments,

Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and
Correctional Services,

Honourable Members,

National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services,
Arthur Fraser,

Inspecting Judge, Justice Edwin Cameron,

Members of the National Council for Correctional Services,

Members of the Parole Boards,

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is, indeed, an honour to address this august House on the occasion of the Budget Vote of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS).

As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our Constitution as a nation, we remain resolute in our overall objective, to ensure people who leave our correctional facilities are rehabilitated, skilled and ready to take up their places in society, as productive, law abiding citizens. Since the advent of our constitutional democracy we have worked hard, enacting enabling legislation to create a conducive environment for a just and humane corrective system.

As such, we have succeeded in transitioning from an oppressive prison system under apartheid, to one that is in sync with international protocols and conventions on corrections and human rights. Allow me, therefore, to share with you facts and figures that serve as progressive indicators of the benefits that have accrued in our quest to correct the offending behaviour of our inmates.

It was the first President of a liberated South Africa, Nkosi Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela (Ah! Dalibhunga), once the world's most famous prisoner, who said and I quote "It is said that no one truly knows a nation, until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones."

In ensuring that a successful reintegration of offenders in society is a reality, significant achievements have been recorded on parolees and probationers who did not violate their conditions of release from our Centres. The daily average case-load of our community corrections system for the year 2020/21 was 52 556 parolees, 7 468 probationers and 891 awaiting-trial persons. This amounts to a caseload of 60 915, which in turn translates to an achievement of 99.13% for parolees without violations, and 99.08% for probationers without violations.

However, we must acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the interface between the Department and communities, especially through community outreach programmes such as *izimbizo*. As a result, we could only manage eleven such *izimbizo* in the 2020/21 financial year.

In the same financial year, a total of 11 833 victims and 3 791 offenders, parolees and probationers participated in restorative justice programmes. This performance, under COVID-19 restrictions, was made possible through the 75 Social Auxiliary Workers that were appointed by the Department. Their major role was to assist in the tracing and preparation of victims for their participation in our restorative justice programmes.

As government we are alive to the importance of working with partners, stakeholders and civil society broadly. We maintain that corrections is a societal matter, and, therefore, welcome all initiatives aimed at enhancing the work of the department.

We have facilitated 363 economic opportunities through partnerships with various stakeholders. For instance, through our working partnership with

the Ekupholeni Mental Health Institute, in Gauteng, we want to acknowledge receipt of a donation of business starter packs under their economic development programme. These starter packs, worth R1 000 each, donated to 18 parolees and probationers, are meant to assist them to start their own small businesses in the areas of car washes, spaza shops and welding. This project forms part of our social reintegration programme for parolees and probationers.

Whilst we realise that our core mandate is to reintegrate offenders back to society, we are also placing a strong emphasis on the participation of victims who have been affected by the crimes committed by these parolees and probationers. As such, we will continue to highlight the incorporation of identified victims as well, who are willing to participate, in economic opportunities afforded to offenders, to ensure that we also redress the plight of those offended (victims).

Chairperson, I cannot overemphasize the significance of these programmes to underscore the importance of those at the receiving end of offending behaviour, to find peace, solace and equilibrium in their lives.

The Department of Correctional Services has responded with urgency to a number of periodic episodes that undermine the mission of corrections in this country. However, we must acknowledge that the security breaches and embarrassing episodes could have been avoided if there was strict adherence to operational procedures and heightened levels of supervision.

It is in this vein that as leadership we have made it mandatory for every security breach or incident to be fully investigated and measures to be

taken almost immediately in order to restore normalcy. Equally we shall ensure that swift and decisive action is taken against those who may have broken the law and applicable regulations – be they inmates, officials or any other person.

The programme of instilling a sense of patriotism in the department is gaining ground. It is centred on creating a culture of common good or public good. This noble objective revolves around Correctional Officials accepting an obligation to promote the welfare of the community, and to work together for the greater benefit of all South Africans. The Minister has already alluded to some of these in his address.

We are at the tail-end of a process to finalize the organizational structure of the Department. This will help to strengthen, align and capacitate our systems so as to optimize our efficiency and effectiveness as an organization. The net effect is to ensure that there is synergy in our planning versus operations, and this is key in terms of meeting our set targets.

Honourable Members, since my arrival in the department I have criss-crossed the country, visiting regions in order to gain a first-hand experience of the challenges facing the employees of the department who operate at the coalface of our operations, that is, the correctional centres. Uppermost in our interventions as leadership is to create a conducive working environment for our employees to be able to discharge their duties unhindered, and motivated.

With progress in the ongoing discussions between organized labour and management, new uniforms have been procured, for staff in our

correctional facilities, and talks are in the final stages in concluding an all-embracing solution to the thorny issue of shift patterns. One other area of concern at Corrections is decaying infrastructure that poses a myriad challenges in our work. I want to reassure all that we have committed to addressing progressively these in this financial year.

I must re-emphasise this point, the Department of Correctional Services will continue to guard against those who lack respect and are unprofessional in their conduct. Such officials must be identified, and appropriate interventions meted out. Discipline and professionalism are part of our organisational culture, and cannot be lost due to deviant behaviour by a few, who misrepresent what we stand for as a collective.

Honourable Members, through the District Development Model, we will be spoilt for choice in terms of increasingly identifying areas where offender labour can be used to touch the lives of our people. We have a number of correctional facilities across the country that have adopted community projects. Through these initiatives we offer support to our citizenry through different programmes such as poverty alleviation, infrastructure development and maintenance.

I must say we are proud of the work that is done by inmates for the benefit of the community. On the one hand it inculcates in the offender the spirit of Ubuntu and raises morale, whilst on the other it stimulates in the community a spirit of forgiveness, redress and restoration. This sets the right tone for effective rehabilitation and consequently social reintegration.

Through a series of sessions with Heads of Centres, led by the National Commissioner, Arthur Fraser, in the different regions, the message was

one of reinforcing going back to basics. These sessions that took place nationally were to ensure consistency of application of the department's services and procedures across all centres by Heads of Centres and Area Commissioners, as well as to capacitate them with the tools to enable uniform execution of their duties.

Keeping correctional facilities clean, treating those incarcerated with dignity and respect, and allowing them a reasonable second chance within the confines of our correctional centres is a noble cause. Our objective is to turn the tide and have correctional centres that work for our people, thereby ensuring safer communities.

The Minister has directed the department to produce a self-sustenance and self-sufficiency model. This concept is premised on the huge potential the department has in leveraging on the farms, properties, land, workshops, amongst others. The portfolio of assets under the auspices of Correctional Services, with innovation and business acumen, can be used as a solid platform to position the department as a viable self-reliant entity. We shall pursue this model and monitor progress closely so that this becomes operational and benefits all in the value-chain.

Honourable Speaker, despite set-backs, the Department of Correctional Services is on track. We are raising the bar because our people have high expectations. Those who do not deserve to be in our brown uniform are being dealt with, and the rot shall be removed.

Our strategic intent will not be clouded or negated by the advent of the Coronavirus pandemic, as we navigate through this difficult period. Ours is to work tirelessly, and with conviction, because our people deserve

better. Our correctional officials have demonstrated, in word and in deed, that they are equal to the task.

My appreciation goes to the Chairperson and Members of the Justice and Correctional Services Portfolio Committee for the guidance, and wise counsel that they always extend to us. I also wish to thank the Inspecting Judge, Edwin Cameron, for his zeal and candour in our engagements.

A special word of gratitude goes to our dedicated and hands-on Minister, Honourable Ronald Ozy Lamola, as well as all DCS officials led by National Commissioner Arthur Fraser. The dedication of the management and staff of this department to the task at hand is what keeps the fires burning at all our correctional facilities across our country.

I thank you!