MEDIA STATEMENT

For immediate release

14 October 2024

MINISTER GROENEWALD VISITS MANGAUNG AND GROOTVLEI CORRECTIONAL CENTRES

Today, the Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Pieter Groenewald, visited the Mangaung and Grootvlei Correctional Centres in Bloemfontein.

During his visit, the Minister conducted a comprehensive physical inspection of the Mangaung facility, where the infamous Thabo Bester escape transpired. This inspection included the area from which the decoy body was removed and the cell where the fire incident occurred.

This assessment again shows that numerous security violations have transpired, confirming that this escape was meticulously planned. Notably, the system has been significantly manipulated, with several employees implicated in the escape. Of those individuals, several officials have been charged as co-accused.

Numerous security system upgrades were presented to the Minister.

During his visit to the Grootvlei Correctional Centre, the Minister observed significant potential, particularly within the agricultural sector, as this centre is equipped with arable land. The Department has expressed its intent to extend the existing vegetable supply to an additional management area.

The Minister was also escorted to the construction site where a new chicken abattoir and four broiler facilities are being developed. This new abattoir will be capable of processing and packaging 500 chickens per hour, thereby enhancing the self-sufficiency of food provisions for other management areas.

The Minister expressed dissatisfaction with the delays linked to these construction projects, attributing these challenges to the Department of Public Works. He intends to formally address this issue with Minister Macpherson.

ENDS.

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