



**MINISTRY OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES,
MS LINDIWE NTSHALINTSHALI, MP**

**BUDGET VOTE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, CAPE TOWN,
13 MAY 2025**

Honourable Chairperson
Minister of Correctional Services
Members of the Portfolio Committee
Honourable Members
National Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services
Inspecting Judge, Leonard Bozalek
Members of the National Council for Correctional Services
Members of the Parole Boards
Ladies and Gentlemen

Sanibonani; Dumelang!

Ours is a democracy that does not claim perfection, but one that demonstrates resilience, accountability, and an unwavering commitment to progress, even in the face of persistent social and economic challenges.

It is within this context that the Department of Correctional Services carries out its mandate as an institution that must equally evolve, respond, and contribute meaningfully to the strengthening of our democracy.

Hence the positioning of the Department of Correctional Services within the Criminal Justice System and how we confront complex and, at times, deeply entrenched challenges that place significant pressure on service delivery.

What must be clear is that this Department is not a finished product, but a work in progress. It is an evolving institution that continuously refines its approach, harnesses its capabilities, and draws strength from its partnerships. Our resilience, therefore, is not defined by endurance alone, but by our ability to adapt, to build, and to deliver in concert with others.

The responsibility entrusted to us is profound. Each day, we work to transform lives, often under the most difficult circumstances, seeking to rehabilitate individuals who may themselves be resistant to change. Yet we remain steadfast. Our commitment does not end at the correctional centre gates; it extends into communities, into families, and into the broader society to which offenders return.

Chairperson,

At the heart of our correctional system is a fundamental principle, that every person placed in our care remains a human being deserving of dignity, protection, and meaningful rehabilitation. The responsibility of the Department of Correctional Services extends far beyond the provision of basic needs such as food, shelter, and security. It includes a duty to safeguard the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of offenders, and to create conditions that support their restoration and reintegration into society.

The transfer of state patients from correctional centres to psychiatric hospitals remains an ongoing and necessary exercise, rooted in both our legal obligations and our commitment to humane and appropriate care. We have engaged extensively with the Department of Health on this matter, and there is a shared understanding of the urgency required to address it.

Honourable Members, it must be acknowledged that the current infrastructure within the public health system is under significant pressure and is not yet able to accommodate all state patients within designated psychiatric institutions. This reality has, at times, resulted in delays in transfers, with some individuals remaining in correctional facilities longer than is ideal for their condition and treatment needs.

Despite these constraints, we are not standing still. Together with the Department of Health, we are strengthening interdepartmental coordination to prioritise cases, improve assessment processes, and ensure that available spaces are utilised as efficiently as possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Correctional Services continues to register measurable progress in the fight against tuberculosis (TB) and HIV within our correctional facilities. This progress is underpinned by the consistent implementation of rigorous screening, testing, and case management protocols at the point of admission, ensuring that no individual enters our system without a clear health assessment and appropriate intervention where required.

Importantly, our approach recognises that correctional centres are not isolated from broader society, and that both public health and rehabilitation outcomes are deeply interconnected. Effective management of TB and HIV within our facilities contributes directly to broader public health, as we reduce transmission, strengthen treatment adherence, and ensure proper referral systems, thereby safeguarding not only those in our care, but also the communities to which they return.

Central to sustaining this impact is our Social Reintegration Strategy, which affirms that rehabilitation cannot succeed in isolation, but requires a coordinated network of support. It is for this reason that the Department has deliberately positioned itself as a facilitator of partnerships, working alongside traditional leaders, business, institutions of higher learning, NGOs, faith-based organisations, and other arms of the State, to ensure

continuity of care, support, and successful reintegration beyond our centres.

Through these partnerships, we are building a continuum of care that supports parolees and probationers, while also recognising and responding to the needs of victims of crime. This integrated approach reflects a fundamental understanding, that safer communities are built not by one institution alone, but through collective effort.

Our collaboration with traditional leadership structures, including the Mzintshane Royal Council in King William's Town and others across Limpopo, the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West, demonstrates how community-rooted partnerships can unlock opportunity. Together, we have facilitated skills development initiatives that empower young people, parolees, and community members with practical competencies that improve livelihoods.

In Kuruman, in partnership with CoGHSTA, we trained 100 beneficiaries, including youth, parolees and victims of crime, in aluminium welding. This is not merely training, but it is an investment in dignity and self-reliance.

Similarly, our partnerships with SETAs, training institutions and other stakeholders have enabled the provision of occupational programmes at no cost to beneficiaries, many of whom receive stipends ranging from R1,000 to R6,000. These initiatives are designed not only to impart skills, but to stimulate economic participation and reduce vulnerability to reoffending.

In the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year alone, the Department facilitated 633 economic opportunities to support reintegration. Among these, 220 parolees and probationers received training in renewable energy, plumbing, bricklaying and hot water systems through a SASSETA-funded programme in Gauteng, equipping them to pursue entrepreneurship or formal employment.

The REONET initiatives further extend these opportunities, offering electrical apprenticeships, plumbing learnerships and digital programmes, complete with stipends and essential tools such as laptops and data.

In KwaZulu-Natal and the Limpopo/Mpumalanga/North West regions, our partnership with the Independent Development Trust through the EPWP Non-State Sector programme supports 118 participants across multiple sites, demonstrating how public employment initiatives can be aligned with correctional objectives.

Honourable Members,

One of the most persistent challenges we face is reoffending. The drivers of this challenge point to unemployment, substance abuse, social exclusion, and lack of support systems. These factors often lie beyond the direct control of the Department. This reality reinforces the importance of a multi-sectoral response.

It is precisely for this reason that we have broadened our interventions to include victims of crime and community members within our skills development programmes. By doing so, we are not only addressing the consequences of crime, but also contributing to social cohesion and economic inclusion.

To date, more than 506 parolees, 85 victims, and 154 community members have benefited from these initiatives, gaining skills in areas such as cellphone repairs, food preservation, and entrepreneurship. These programmes encourage self-employment and the transfer of skills within communities, multiplying their impact.

Esteemed Guests,

The recent approval of the Community Corrections Forums Policy marks a significant step in institutionalising community participation in crime prevention. This framework strengthens alignment with the Integrated

Crime and Violence Prevention Strategy and ensures that community-based structures are both functional and impactful.

Our Ambassador Programme, which deploys ex-offenders to engage with learners in schools, is another example of how lived experience can be harnessed as a powerful deterrent against crime. Prevention, after all, is most effective when it is relatable and grounded in reality.

In the 2025/26 financial year, the Department conducted 257 community imbizos across the country, creating platforms for dialogue, awareness, and collective action against crime.

We have also intensified our community outreach initiatives, where offenders, under supervision, contribute meaningfully to society. From building and renovating homes for destitute families, to establishing and maintaining school vegetable gardens, these programmes restore dignity while reinforcing accountability.

Through our back-to-school campaigns, we have supported vulnerable learners with uniforms and food parcels, while addressing critical social challenges such as gangsterism. To date, over 22,000 parolees and probationers have participated in community-based programmes, an indication of the scale and reach of our interventions.

Chairperson,

Our partnerships with institutions of higher learning further strengthen our work. By facilitating research, innovation and experiential learning, we are shaping a new generation of professionals while enhancing evidence-based practices within correctional services. In 2025 alone, 136 students were placed in correctional centres, contributing both to their development and to the operational capacity of the Department.

We would be remiss not to acknowledge that our most strategic asset remains our officials. They are the backbone of this institution, the men and women who carry forward its mission under often demanding conditions.

While fiscal constraints persist, we remain committed to improving their working conditions, addressing operational concerns, and filling critical vacancies, particularly in scarce skills areas. At the same time, we are investing in the recruitment of young professionals to ensure continuity and sustainability.

Honourable Members,

Despite a constrained fiscal environment, we are confident in our ability to meet our targets within the allocated budget over the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework. Our track record of prudent financial management gives us confidence that we will continue to deliver without exceeding our allocation.

In conclusion, this Department stands not only as a resilient institution, but as one that is deliberately building, learning, and integrating. We are harnessing the collective strength of our partners, within and beyond government, to advance a shared goal: a safer South Africa in which rehabilitation is meaningful, reintegration is supported, and communities are active participants in justice.

I thank you.