



**MINISTRY:  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR ORAL REPLY**

**QUESTION NO ★104**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 13)**

**★104. Mr M R Mashego (ANC) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation**

What is the status of the action her department has taken (a) as it relates to the intervention made by the SA National Defence Force and the National Treasury (details furnished) to assist in efforts to urgently rehabilitate the Vaal River system and (b) to ensure that appropriate action is taken against implicated officials?

NO1865E

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**MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION**

For the benefit of Honourable Members who were not in this House when my Colleague, Hon Mboweni: the Minister of Finance delivered his Medium Term Budget Policy statement (MTBPS) on 24 October 2018, the Minister said,

“We are dealing decisively and urgently with the water crisis in the Vaal River System. Our immediate focus is to mobilise short-term financing by reprioritising funds and increasing capacity. I have asked the Commander in Chief of the SA National Defence Force: the President and the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans for the military to assist us immediately with engineering works and other expertise to resolve the crisis in the Vaal River System. I am happy to report that both the President and the Minister have agreed”.

Subsequently, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) started working at Emfuleni Local Municipality (LM) on 19 November 2018 to assist with engineering and other expertise to resolve the pollution crisis in the Vaal River System.

An intervention team comprising of the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Department of Cooperative Governance in Gauteng Province (GCOGTA), Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA), East Rand Water Care Company (ERWAT), Department of Defence (DOD) and Emfuleni Local Municipality (ELM) was established. The purpose of the intervention team is to coordinate the intervention in Emfuleni Local Municipality in an integrated manner to deal with the refurbishment of 44 pump stations and associated rising mains and three wastewater treatment plants (Leeuwkuil, Rietspruit and Sebokeng).

An Implementation Protocol Agreement was signed by all accounting officers of the institutions mentioned above for the successful execution of the intervention and fostering the principle of accountability and administrative justice. The DWS has appointed a wastewater specialist in the form of ERWAT as an implementing agent to manage the capital operations of the intervention. An Implementation Agent Agreement has been signed by both the DWS and ERWAT. A Service Level Agreement was also signed between the DWS and the Department of Defence.

- (a) Having done all the above, Honourable Mashego, the Whip of the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation is asking what have we managed to achieve towards ensuring the the Vaal River system is rehabilitated. The following progress has been made:
- In 2018/19 financial year, the Department provided R20 million from the Water Service Infrastructure Grant (WSIG) to Emfuleni Local Municipality.
  - A conditional roll-over of R241 million has been received from National Treasury during the 2019/20 financial year.
  - When the SANDF was deployed in November 2018, only two (2) out of the forty-four (44) pump stations were operational. Currently, seven (7) pump stations are operational; twenty-four (24) are functional but require ongoing monitoring while thirteen (13) pump stations are not yet operational.
  - The Ekurhuleni Water Care Company (ERWAT), a wastewater specialist entity of the City of Ekurhuleni, has also been appointed as an implementing agent to urgently restore the water services infrastructure into an operational state, thus stopping pollution into the Vaal River.
- (b) Prior to the deployment of the SANDF, the department had issued a total of 11 notices and 3 directives for non-compliance to the Emfuleni Local Municipality. Some of the administrative actions taken by DWS against the municipality include the following:
- Issuing a notice for raw sewer spillage of Evaton gardens pump station on 06 April 2014;
  - Issuing a notice for raw sewer spillage at Boitumelo pump station on 20 September 2018.
  - Issuing a directive for on 22 August 2014 for polluting the Rietspruit River due to manhole overflow in Evaton.
  - Issuing a directive for pump station 8 overflowing into the Klip River on 20 September 2018.

As indicated above, the Department performed its regulatory function prior to the intervention. However, the challenges at the Emfuleni Local Municipality were exacerbated by poor maintenance of the treatment works and associated networks.

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