



EFF STATEMENT ON UNANSWERED QUESTIONS BY MINISTERS

Wednesday, 11 January 2023

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes with indignation the publishing by parliament of a question paper of lapsed questions which were posed by Members of Parliament to the Executive in 2022, and to which the Executive failed to reply. Rule 135 of the Rules of the National Assembly provide that all questions not answered by the last sitting day of Parliament's annual session lapse after 20 days of the day of the last sitting.

For the year 2022, Members of the Executive failed to provide answers to 83 questions from Members of Parliament, which is an increase from the 70 questions that were not answered in 2021. Nineteen of these unanswered questions were asked by members of the EFF, and straddled concerns relating to the dysfunctionality of the Road Accident Fund, to specific concerns about graduates who have not been granted their certificates because of the failures of NSFAS to pay fees even though some of these graduates qualified for funding.

The most notorious of these ministers is the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, who failed to reply to 27 questions asked to her in 2022, the Minister of Transport who failed to reply to 18 questions, the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs who failed to reply to 12 questions, and the Minister of Tourism who failed to reply to 9 questions.

The failure by these Ministers to reply timeously to questions by Members of Parliament is a demonstration of the contempt with which they hold not only parliament, but the very Constitution they swore to respect and defend. Questions are a key mechanism used by the legislative arm of the State to hold the executive accountable, and ministers do not have the right not to reply to these questions. In

terms of Rule 146 of the Rules of the National Assembly, ministers are required to reply to questions for written reply within 10 days of these questions having been placed on the question paper.

Furthermore, the Speaker is empowered to report Ministers who fail to reply to questions to the Leader of Government Business. The Leader of Government Business is the Deputy President, and we all know that he has been a lame duck from the day of his appointment and has no capacity to hold Ministers accountable.

The President is the head of the Executive and must take ultimate responsibility for the failure of the ministers he has appointed to respect Parliament and the Constitution. This failure is a further demonstration of the disdain in which members of the Ramaphosa administration view accountability. Starting from the president down, these people do not think they are accountable to parliament, or to any institution for that matter.

The EFF will write to the Speaker to demand answers on whether or not she has written to the Leader of Government Business to report these delinquent ministers, and on further steps she has taken to ensure that Parliament is respected and that ministers are held to account.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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