



Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority

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MEDIA STATEMENT

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Greeting to:

Members of the Media

PSiRA Management

Colleagues

Members of the public

And all guests present today

We have invited you this morning to share an update on the ongoing investigations related to an illegal training camp where 95 Libyan nationals were arrested in Mpumalanga two weeks ago. The Authority plays a crucial role in regulating the private security industry to ensure that it contributes positively to our national security. And we do so to promote a legitimate industry that acts in accordance with the principles echoed in our Constitution.

Our priority remains the safeguarding of our citizens and upholding the highest standards of integrity and professionalism within the private security industry. Like any other regulator established by our Constitution, our work is subject to the rule of law and conducted with the utmost integrity, respect for legal processes, and the recognition of the rights and obligations of all parties involved. We therefore hope that the above will assist to explain why we deferred an opportunity to account prematurely to the public and clarify the many questions that were raised in the past few weeks.

We align ourselves with the principles in our Constitution, which mandates the safeguarding of national security through adherence to the law and democratic values. Complementing these principles, the Regulation of Foreign Military Assistance Act 15 of 1998 strictly controls foreign military assistance, preventing unauthorized military activities within our borders. The Authority is empowered to enforce the law, in the event of a violation of the above legislation within the private security industry.

Council Members: Dr Audrey Leah Shibambo (Chairperson), Adv. Simosonke Wiseman Chamane (Council Member);
Pretty Nozipho Makukele (Council Member); Nothando Zodumo Sabela (Council Member)

As you may be aware, security training is highly regulated, and often requires compliance with a set legal criteria. Our legislation defines security training as any training required by the law for a person to be registered or allowed to provide a security service. The second cardinal requirement amongst others is that you must be a South African citizen or at least be in possession of a permanent residence status. Any person who is not legible to be registered and is not a South African citizen may not receive security training unless permitted or exempted otherwise in terms of the law or other International legal instruments.

Therefore, the scope of our investigations into the activities of Milites Dei Security Services (Pty) Ltd (MDSS) and its personnel focus on the nature of security training of the Libyans nationals, the accreditation of the training camp, accreditation of the training programs and training infrastructure on site. As a point of departure, we were obliged to ascertain certain legal aspect such as nationality and compliance with our Immigration laws, the process leading up to their entry and the undertaking of training within our borders. For the purposes of our scope, we will restrict our feedback to issues relevant to our mandate and scope of investigation.

I begin by outlining the timelines leading up to the arrests and progressive investigations by the Authority. On the 18th of July 2024, we were informed by SAPS of the allegations that MDSS was conducting military training in a farm in Mpumalanga. On the 19th we redirected our Law Enforcement Team that was deployed in Mpumalanga, to investigate the allegations at the farm . On the 21st we issued MDSS, with a directive to cease training operations of the Libyan nationals with immediate effect. MDSS requested an opportunity to consult their legal representatives and they were granted.

On the 23rd of July 2024 they confirmed immediate cessation of training of the Libyans and offered to cooperate with the investigation. From 19th July 2024 , our team maintained constant surveillance and monitored the activities at the farm until the joint operations which saw the arrest of the 95 Libyan nationals on the 26th of July 2024.

Since the investigations progressed, We wish to confirm that MDSS is registered with the Authority, and they are accredited to train Security Grades (E-C) from 2019 as per our records. We would like to further confirm that a routine inspection was conducted at the accredited facility eleven months ago. The current location of the accredited facility is

unchanged however, it is worth noting that the investigations discovered a second training facility located 7.5 kilometres away from the original the accredited facility.

The second training facility is the same facility referred to as the "Illegal Libyan Military Training Camp". The investigations discovered that the Libyan Military Training camp was never accredited by the Authority. The duration of the training programs conducted by MDSS takes longer than our local security training programs. The nature of the training included extensive physical activities with military styled structures. Investigations also uncovered instructors that are not accredited by Authority at the facility. These trainers were used military ranks which further reaffirms the nature of training that was being conducted at the training facility. Based on the work concluded this far, we arrived at the following preliminary findings.

1. That the second training facility where the Libyans were found, is not accredited and therefore illegal.
2. That the training programme and duration is longer than the normal accredited security training.
3. That the standards of the training that was offered was foreign or adopted from other countries.
4. That no local security grades training such as the accredited (E-C) that were offered at the Libyan Military training camp.
5. That some instructors that offered training were non-South Africans.
6. That the design and layout of the infrastructure of the Libyan Camp supported a military style training camp.
7. That there was contravention of the immigration laws of South Africa by both the owners and the Libyan learners.
8. That there was no authorisation, agreements and or exemptions granted to MDSS , by the National Regulator for Conventional Arms Control to provide training or military training to Libyans nationals.
9. That MDSS, its owners and personnel contravened the Code of conduct for Private Security Service Providers.
10. That the activities of MDSS its owners and personnel at the Libyan Training Military Camp were in violation of various criminal statutes.

In light of the above feedback, the next process is the consideration of charges and formal prosecution of the service providers and individuals involved for the contravention of the code of conduct and criminal charges. We also wish to confirm that as of today, that MDSS and its directors were served with notices of suspensions.

We also thought that it is important for us to share the enforcement work that we have done in the past five years. Part of our regulatory mandate is to monitor the activities of over 16000 registered security service providers including the 10% accredited as training providers.

The monitoring involves amongst others physical inspections, data analysis of the activities of service providers, compliance awareness programmes, investigations of complaints, extensive advocacy programmes, collaboration with other regulators, and enforcement of legislation. These activities are planned annually based on the prior data analysis to determine enforcement targets, available budgets, risk analysis and capacity requirements. In our medium term planning we were able to conduct over 220000 inspections which resulted in over 14300 cases registered with the South African Police for various contraventions. From these rigorous regulatory interventions, we were able to arrest over 4200 individual security service providers and finalised 3400 criminal cases.

Over and above these successes we were able to prosecute over 8700 cases of improper conduct which resulted in over 4400 withdrawals of registrations and over R 100 000 000 fines imposed against security service providers. These above successes were an overall demonstration of the commitment of the staff in fulfilling their regulatory mandate for the benefit of the people of South Africa. The Authority recorded overall average performance of 88.2% against pre-determined outcomes in the past five-years of our planning circle. We also believe that there is always room to improve our ability to monitor the activities of security operators much more frequently.

In light of the above progress, we will continue to work tirelessly to enforce compliance, conduct rigorous inspections, and take decisive actions against any entities found in violation of our regulations. We will continue to enhance our regulatory frameworks, increasing monitoring, and maintain close collaboration with other law enforcement agencies to prevent unlawful activities from taking root in our communities.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank South Africans for heeding our call to provide us with an opportunity to conduct thorough investigations. We were cognisant to the fact that the matter is of national interest, sensitive to our national security and thus requiring constant feedback.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you.

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