

Security of Hawks offices likely to come under scrutiny

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THE security at the offices of the directorate of priority crimes investigation (DPCI), the Hawks, is likely to come under scrutiny when the top brass of the police services appear before Parliament this week.

A report tabled to the portfolio committee last week on the security upgrades at Hawks offices, which were recently broken into, was found to have been inadequate.

The offices were broken

into two months ago, and robbers made off with computers at their headquarters at the Promat Building in Silverton, Pretoria.

It was reported at the time that the burglary was concentrated in the support environment where human resources, finance and the supply chain sections are located.

During last week's meeting, lawmakers heard that an assessment by the protection and security services division in 2010 had identified shortcomings and certain

recommendations were made to ensure the facilities were secure.

An audit assessment was done five years later by the same division and that both reports were handed to the Hawks for implementation.

The report presented, received by the committee last week, said among the shortcomings identified were the need for perimeter security upgrade, maintenance of overgrown vegetation and manned access of control points, including biometric

readers.

The zoning of sensitive areas and appointment of a competent manager for security were among items identified for security upgrades.

"The majority of these recommendations have not been implemented. We are currently busy with a process to determine what was implemented based on those recommendations," the report said.

The police had asked to furnish an updated report at the next meeting of the committee to indicate which items had

been attended to.

During the briefing, the parliamentarians heard that security-needed requirements at the Hawks have been referred to the Department of Public Works.

"We have not received a response. It is our appeal to the committee to invite the Department of Public Works next week to explain why nothing has been done to date in so far as these requirements are concerned," said one official.

Committee chairperson Francois Beukman was not

pleased with the report that did not cover aspects that had been raised at another meeting in Durban, when they were briefed by the acting head of Hawks Yolisa Matakata.

"It will make for DPCI to operationally function effectively if those matters are addressed," Beukman said.

Committee member Leonard Ramatlakane said the SAPS needed to be given appropriate time to prepare a comprehensive report.

"This is not close to concerns we want," he said.