

Hawks offices under scrutiny

Mayibongwe Maqhina

THE security at the offices of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation, 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, were found to be inadequate.

The offices were broken into two months ago and robbers made off with computers from 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.

Audit

An audit assessment was done five years later by the same division and both reports were handed to DPCI for implementation. The report presented, received by the committee last week, said that among the shortcomings identified were the need for a 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 also among items identified for security upgrades.

“The majority of these recommendations were not implemented. We are busy with a process to determine what was implemented based on those recommendations,” the report said.

During the briefing, parliamentarians heard that security-needed requirements at the DPCI were referred to the Department of Public Works.

"Up to now we have not received any response. It is our appeal to the committee to invite the Department of Public Works next week to explain why nothing was 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 were raised at another meeting in Durban, when they were briefed by the acting head of Hawks, Yolisa Matakata.

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