

■ PARLIAMENT

# Security crackdown on MPs, staff

AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (ANA)

MPS AND senior parliamentary staff have been urged not to use their clout to bypass security at the national legislature.

In a briefing to Parliament's portfolio committee on police about concerns regarding security at the legislature – following the suicide by gun of a parliamentary staff member on the precinct recently – police and MPs raised a troubling phenomenon of senior staffers and MPs asking officers “Do you know who I am?” when they're asked to show their parliamentary accreditation or are asked to pass their bags through metal detectors.

Police Minister Bheki Cele urged

Parliament to educate MPs and staff about security measures and the need that everyone be screened before entering the precinct.

“If this member asks a constable ‘do you know who I am’, that guy is already pushed out,” said Cele.

“Just imagine where the police officer says, yes, you are honourable Groenewald, so what? There will be war in Parliament...”

The committee received a briefing from police highlighting security gaps at the legislature. These included a failure by the Department of Public Works (DPW) to put in place physical security features to help police do their job.

It emerged that the department had registered a project to upgrade

security measures in 2007, but it came to a standstill when its scope changed.

The project was resuscitated last year, but several permissions have to be received first, including from the SA Heritage Resource Agency, since the legislature is a heritage site.

Police Major General Leon Rabie told MPs security would be beefed up from October 1, when those entering Parliament would be required to produce their access cards when entering and wear them where they were visible to police. All people would have to pass through a metal detector, with only vehicles with a parking disc to be granted access. In addition, all vehicles, including delivery vehicles, would be thoroughly searched.



Police commissioner Khehla Sitole and his team briefed Parliament's portfolio committee on police about concerns regarding security at the legislature after a staff member shot and killed himself. | **ZUKISWA MINYI** African News Agency (ANA)

Those with weapons would have to declare their firearms to a designated security official.

Earlier, Rabie told MPs that parliamentary worker Lennox Garane was

allowed to enter the premises without putting his bag through a scanner.

The police officer on duty has since been placed on suspension and will be subjected to disciplinary steps.