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Q&A



Will parliament be ready to host the most important event on its calendar anytime soon? Chris Barron asked the spokesperson for parliament, **MOLOTO MOTHAPO** ...

When is parliament going to be fit for purpose?

Parliament is fit for purpose, there's no doubt about that.

So when is the National Assembly going to host the state of the nation address again?

Once the rebuilding has been completed in 2025.

In time for next year's Sona?

No, the date for completion is December 2025, so we're talking 2026.

Is this parliament pulling out all the stops?

The first year after the fire in 2022 there was a lot of work that happened.

We're talking more than three years, aren't we?

Following the fire it was regarded as a crime scene. There was an investigation by the Hawks, then an assessment by a multidisciplinary team of engineers from the department of public works...

How many senior managers have been charged?

There was an internal investigation and nine are under suspension. That does not relate only to the fire but also alleged administrative irregularities.

You mean failures?

Irregularities is how we define it.

Leaving parliament unprotected and unmonitored for three days qualifies as an irregularity?

Our internal investigation revealed certain concerns ...

Has any parliamentary official been charged with criminal negligence?

No.

Have the recommendations of the forensic report after the fire been implemented?

I don't know what forensic report or recommendations you're referring to.

Are the fire sprinklers working?

Where? If you're referring to where the fire happened, that area is damaged obviously, so it is not functional, but everywhere else everything is working. In fact, one of the things we have done is to repurpose the fourth and fifth floors to create 155 new offices.

Are the CCTV cameras being monitored?

24/7.

So no unidentified people will be left to wander in and out of these offices or steal copper wire from the bathrooms like before the fire?

No, there have not been any such incidents since the fire. The whole parliamentary precinct is adequately secured.

Well, that's encouraging.

I know it's not encouraging to you because you don't like good news.

As taxpayers we love good news because we pay when parliament goes up in flames.

Rest assured, parliament is well secured, the cameras are fully functional, we even have a state of the art fire monitoring system.

Has parliament been insured yet?

That question should go to the department of public works and the Treasury.

Does parliament bear full responsibility for the repairs?

Absolutely, parliament takes full responsibility for the project.

So if there's a replay of the Covid PPE tenders corruption scandal the buck stops with your boss?

All measures have been put in place to ensure the resources provided are not abused or fall into wrong hands.

Does parliament feel any shame for allowing the central symbol of our democracy to be torched?

There is no conclusive evidence of complicity by parliament.

Adequate security measures weren't in place. Wasn't parliament responsible for that?

Parliament together with the SAPS.

So you're saying shame belongs to both parliament and the SAPS?

No, I'm saying there are internal processes that are still unfolding and we do not have the evidence that this or that person was responsible.