

## **Placement on parole of selected categories of sentenced offenders**

**08 May 2020**

President Cyril Ramaphosa has authorised the placement on parole of selected categories of sentenced offenders as a measure to combat the spread of COVID-19 in correctional facilities, which are considered high-risk areas for infection.

The President has taken this step in response to a call by the United Nations to all countries to reduce prison populations so that social distancing and self-isolation conditions can be observed during this period.

In South Africa, as in many other countries, correctional facilities have witnessed outbreaks of coronavirus infections among inmates and personnel.

A number of countries across the world have already heeded the call by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and have released a number of offenders in detention.

The President has taken this decision in terms of Section 82(1)(a) of the Correctional Services Act of 1998 which empowers the President to authorise at any time the placement on correctional supervision or parole of any sentenced prisoner, subject to conditions that may be recommended by the Correctional Supervision and Parole Board.

The decision taken by the President to combat the spread of COVID-19 in correctional centres could relieve our correctional services facilities of just under 19,000 inmates out of a population of 155,000.

The parole dispensation will apply to low-risk inmates who have passed their minimum detention period or will approach this period in the coming five years.

This dispensation excludes inmates sentenced to life imprisonment or serving terms for specified other serious crimes, including sexual offences, murder and attempted murder, gender based violence and child abuse.

Inmates that will be affected by this decision will be placed on parole instead of having their sentences remitted. They will therefore continue to serve their sentence under Community Corrections until they reach their respective sentence expiry dates.

Offenders may be arrested and ultimately reincarcerated if they violate their release conditions.

The placement of qualifying sentenced offenders will take place over a 10-week period and will commence as soon as all Parole Board processes have been

finalised and all relevant rehabilitation and pre-release programmes are attended.

Minister of Justice Mr Ronald Lamola will in due course provide more details on the parole placement programme in a public briefing.

**Public enquiries:** Presidential Hotline 17737

**COVID-19 Specific enquiries:** NICD Hotline 0800 0029 999

**Media enquiries:** Spokesperson to the President, Khusela Diko on  
media@presidency.gov.za

**Issued by:** The Presidency