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INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS OF MALADMINISTRATION AND/OR IMPROPER CONDUCT BY FUNCTIONARIES OF THE PRESIDENCY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE RELATING TO EXPENDITURE FOR CATERING ON BOARD THE PRESIDENTIAL AIRCRAFT, INKWAZI



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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS	DESCRIPTION
AFB	Air Force Base
ATR	Air Support Request
Cabinet Memo	Cabinet Memorandum of 1994
Constitution	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
DoD	Department of Defence
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
ICW	International catering waste
NSS	National Security Service
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act, 1999
Public Protector Act	Public Protector Act, 1994
Public Protector Rules	Rules Relating to Investigations by the Public Protector and Matters Incidental Thereto, 2018 as amended
RSA	Republic of South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
SAAF	South African Air Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
VAT	Value Added Tax
VIP	Very Important Person
VVIP	Very Very Important People
VBLO	VVIP Base Liaison Officer

Executive Summary

- (i) This is a report of the Public Protector issued in terms of section 182(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Constitution) and section 8(1) of the Public Protector Act, 1994 (Public Protector Act), as well as Rule 40(b) of the Rules Relating to Investigations by the Public Protector and Matters Incidental thereto, 2018 as amended (Public Protector Rules) as promulgated under section 7(11) of the Public Protector Act.
- (ii) The report relates to an investigation into allegations of maladministration and/or improper conduct by functionaries of the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa (the Presidency) and the Department of Defence (DoD) relating to alleged exorbitant expenditure incurred for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft, for a flight from London to South Africa, and a subsequent cancellation of a scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey.
- (iii) The investigation emanates from a complaint lodged by the Democratic Alliance Leader, Mr J Steenhuisen (the Complainant) on 14 November 2023.
- (iv) The Complainant requested an investigation into allegations of exorbitant and wasteful expenditure incurred for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft as contained in the City Press newspaper *exposé* authored by a journalist, Ms Erika Gibson, on 12 November 2023.
- (v) The Complainant alleged, *inter alia*, that:
 - (a) In the news article, several damning allegations are made against the Presidency for the wanton and unnecessary inflation of catering budgets; the alleged skilful manipulation of catering costs to accommodate guests on both domestic and international trips, and the immense financial strain this has placed on the South African Airforce (SAAF), which has been

rendered ineffective due to the cost of exorbitant catering and severe financial mismanagement by the Department of Defence (DoD);

- (b) In 2022, on a twelve (12) hour flight from London to South Africa alone, following the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, it is alleged that the total cost for catering for each Very Important Person (VIP) was twenty four thousand rand (R24 000.00), which amounted to six hundred-thousand-rand (R600 000.00) in total for fewer than eighteen (18) guests;
- (c) A scheduled flight to Turkey in June 2023, cost the South African taxpayer ninety-one thousand rand (R91 000.00) for catering that went to waste, since the flight was cancelled;
- (d) Instructions were given to purchase a variety of expensive liquor to cater for certain VIPs on board the Presidential Aircraft, including luxury items such as Lindt and Ferrero Rocher chocolates, biltong and an entire chocolate cake, which was allegedly smuggled out of the aircraft by one (01) of the guests. All of this at the expense of the South African taxpayer;
- (e) These allegations are made worse considering that a report by an investigative journalist, M Estelle Ellis (Ms Ellis), was released which revealed that between August 2022 and September 2023, one thousand seven hundred and twenty two (1722) cases of severe acute malnutrition in children were diagnosed in the Eastern Cape, and of these one hundred and one (101) died as did another thirteen (13), who were diagnosed with moderate to severe acute malnutrition;
- (f) It is deplorable that the catering bill of the Presidential Aircraft has become so exorbitant; that the remaining budget for the financial year stood at forty-five thousand rand (R45000.00). To add insult to injury, the expensive taste of the President's VIP travel guests is milking the public purse of money meant for the SAAF, which is already in such financial

constraints that 85% of the aircraft are unserviceable due to financial constraints. Should South Africa go to war tomorrow, South Africa will have no air force because the taxpayer money meant for aerial defence has been spent on expensive alcohol, chocolates and cake for the VIP guests; and

(g) It is inconceivable that in a country with an ever-present hunger crisis and with a defunct national air force, the President can spend public funds on luxury and exorbitant catering bills for the Presidential Aircraft. This public money is meant for the protection of South African citizens and the provision of their most basic needs, such as food, not to make the President and his guests fatter on the Presidential Aircraft.

(vi) On analysis of the complaint, the following issue was identified to inform and focus the investigation:

(a) Whether the functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD incurred exorbitant expenditure for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for a flight from London to South Africa and the subsequent cancellation of a scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, if so, whether such conduct amounts to improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the Constitution and maladministration in terms of section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act.

(vii) On 14 November 2025, a Notice in terms of Rule 41(1) was issued to the Complainant; Ms P Baleni (Ms Baleni), the Director-General and Secretary of Cabinet and to Dr T Gamede (Dr Gamede), the Acting Secretary for Defence, to provide them with an opportunity to make submissions in relation to the proposed closure of the investigation.

(viii) On 11 November 2025, Ms Una Christians (Ms Christians), the Personal Assistant to the Complainant acknowledged receipt of the Notice on behalf of

the Complainant, however, the Complainant did not make any further submission in respect of the matter.

- (ix) Having considered the evidence established during the investigation against the relevant regulatory framework, the following findings are made:
- (a) **Whether the functionaries of the Presidency and Department of Defence incurred exorbitant expenditure for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for a flight from London to South Africa and the subsequent cancellation of a scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, if so, whether such conduct amounts to improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the Constitution and maladministration in terms of section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act**
- (aa) The allegation of maladministration and/or improper conduct by functionaries of the Presidency and DoD relating to expenditure for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for the flight from London to South Africa and subsequent cancellation of the scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, **is not substantiated.**
- (bb) The functionaries of the Presidency arranged a flight for the President and his delegation from Waterkloof Air Force Base to Washington, DC, and further to London through an ATR dated 12 September 2022, in line with the provisions of Clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.
- (cc) The procurement and payment for the catering services thereof were made in line with the provisions of Clause 15.7 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.
- (dd) The functionaries of the DoD paid an amount of R139 319.73 to SRS Aviation on 17 February 2023, for catering services for the flight from Waterkloof Air

Force Base, for Washington, DC and further on to London, and not R600 000.00 as alleged by the Complainant.

- (ee) The functionaries of the DoD procured catering for breakfast and dinner to be served to the President and his delegation during the flight, which did not include alcohol, in compliance with paragraph 9(c) of the National Treasury Guidelines Instruction. The menu/catering orders for the flights did not include luxury items such as Lindt and Ferrero Rocher chocolates. Though 2 x 500g biltong was marked as a requested item on the Cabin crew request form dated 02 June 2023, for the flight to Turkey. Biltong is, however, regarded as a snack of cultural significance in South Africa, and seen as being part of the South African heritage and not necessarily considered to be a luxury item.
- (ff) The President has the prerogative, in terms of paragraph 15.3 of the Presidential Handbook, to invite passengers on the official aircraft designated for his use and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction make provision for catering for the President and passengers on the aircraft.
- (gg) Perishable foods are disposed of in line with the SAAF Memorandum of July 2025, and non-perishable items are returned to the VIP Kitchen for use on future flights.
- (hh) The functionaries of the Presidency arranged a trip from Cape Town to Ankara, Turkey, for the President and his delegation through ATR dated 02 June 2023, in line with the provisions of Clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.
- (ii) The procurement for the catering services thereof was made in line with the provisions of Clause 15.7 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.

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- (jj) The functionaries of the DoD cancelled the flight on 02 June 2023 at 22h19, when the procurement for catering services was already done on the morning of 02 June 2023. As a result, an amount of R82 037.84 was paid to SRS Aviation for the aforesaid catering services, in compliance with paragraph 3 of SRS Cancellation's Policy.
- (kk) The functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD complied with the provisions of section 195(1)(a), (b) and (f) of the Constitution when they procured catering services for the President and his delegation for the respective flights and subsequent cancellation of the trip to Ankara, Turkey. While the situation resulted in additional costs due to the cancellation, the evidence suggests that reasonable care was exercised, and mitigation steps were taken.
- (ll) Accordingly, the conduct of functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD does not constitute improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the Constitution or maladministration as contemplated in section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act, 1994.
- (x) The Public Protector considers this matter closed in terms of section 8(1) read with section 8(3) of the Public Protector Act and Rule 40(b) of the Public Protector Rules.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This is a Closing report of the Public Protector issued in terms of section 182(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution), and section 8(1) of the Public Protector Act, 1994, (the Public Protector Act).

1.2. The report is submitted in terms of sections 8(1) read with section 8(3) of the Public Protector Act, and Rule 40(b) of the *Rules Relating to Investigations by the Public Protector and Matters Incidental Thereto*, 2018, as amended (Public Protector Rules) which empowers the Public Protector to make known the findings of an investigation to affected parties (including the Complainant) for such persons to note the outcome of the investigation:

1.2.1. Mr J Steenhuisen, Leader of the Democratic Alliance;

1.2.2. Ms P Baleni, Director-General in the Presidency and Secretary of Cabinet; and

1.2.3. Dr T Gamede, the Acting Secretary for Defence.

1.3. The report relates to an investigation into allegations of maladministration and/or improper conduct by functionaries of the Presidency (the Presidency) and the Department of Defence (DoD) relating to the exorbitant expenditure incurred for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft, for a flight from London to South Africa, and a subsequent cancellation of a scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey.

2. THE COMPLAINT

2.1. The investigation emanates from a complaint lodged by the Democratic Alliance Leader, Mr J Steenhuisen (the Complainant) on 14 November 2023.

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- 2.2. The Complainant requested an investigation into allegations of exorbitant and wasteful expenditure incurred for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft as contained in the City Press newspaper *exposé* authored by a journalist, Ms Erika Gibson, on 12 November 2023.
- 2.3. The Complainant alleged, *inter alia*, that:
- 2.3.1. In the news article, several damning allegations are made against the Presidency for the wanton and unnecessary inflation of catering budgets, the alleged skilful manipulation of catering costs to accommodate guests on both domestic and international trips, and the immense financial strain this has placed on the SAAF, which has been rendered ineffective due to the cost of exorbitant catering and severe financial mismanagement by the DoD;
- 2.3.2. In 2022, on a 12-hour flight from London to South Africa alone, following the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, it is alleged that the total cost for catering for each VIP was R24 000.00, which amounted to R600 000.00 in total for fewer than eighteen (18) guests;
- 2.3.3. A scheduled flight to Turkey in June 2023, cost the South African taxpayer R91 000.00 for catering that went to waste, since the flight was cancelled;
- 2.3.4. Instructions were given to purchase a variety of expensive liquor to cater for certain VIPs on board the Presidential Aircraft, including luxury items such as Lindt and Ferrero Rocher chocolates, biltong and an entire chocolate cake, which was allegedly smuggled out of the aircraft by one of the guests. All of this at the expense of the South African taxpayer;
- 2.3.5. These allegations are made worse considering that a report by an investigative journalist, Ms Ellis, was released which revealed that between August 2022 and September 2023, 1722, cases of severe acute malnutrition in children were

diagnosed in the Eastern Cape, and of these 101 died as did another 13, who were diagnosed with moderate to severe acute malnutrition;

- 2.3.6. It is deplorable that the catering bill of the Presidential Aircraft has become so exorbitant; that the remaining budget for the financial year stood at R45 000.00. To add insult to injury, the expensive taste of the President's VIP travel guests is milking the public purse of money meant for the SAAF, which is already in such financial constraints that 85% of the aircraft are unserviceable due to financial constraints. Should South Africa go to war tomorrow, South Africa will have no air force because the taxpayer money meant for aerial defence has been spent on expensive alcohol, chocolates and cake for the VIP guests; and
- 2.3.7. It is inconceivable that in a country with an ever-present hunger crisis and with a defunct national air force, the President can spend public funds on luxury and exorbitant catering bills for the Presidential Aircraft. This public money is meant for the protection of South African citizens and the provision of their most basic needs, such as food, not to make the President and his guests fatter on the Presidential Aircraft.

3. POWERS AND JURISDICTION OF THE PUBLIC PROTECTOR

- 3.1. The Public Protector is an independent constitutional institution established under section 181(1)(a) of the Constitution to strengthen constitutional democracy through investigating and redressing improper conduct in state affairs.
- 3.2. Section 182(1) of the Constitution provides that:

"The Public Protector has the power, as regulated by national legislation –

- (a) *to investigate any conduct in state affairs, or in the public administration in any sphere of government, that is alleged or suspected to be improper or to result in any impropriety or prejudice;*
- (b) *to report on that conduct; and*
- (c) *to take appropriate remedial action”.*

3.3. Section 182(2) directs that the Public Protector has additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation. The Public Protector’s powers are regulated and amplified by the Public Protector Act which states, amongst others, that the Public Protector has the powers to investigate and redress maladministration and related improprieties in the conduct of state affairs.

3.4. The Presidency and the DoD are organs of state as envisaged in section 239 of the Constitution and the conduct of its functionaries amounts to conduct in state affairs, as a result, the Public Protector is satisfied that the complaint falls within its competency to investigate as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the Constitution and section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act.

4. ISSUE IDENTIFIED FOR INVESTIGATION

4.1. Based on the analysis of the complaint, the following issue was identified to inform and focus the investigation:

4.1.1. Whether the functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD incurred exorbitant expenditure for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for a flight from London to South Africa and the subsequent cancellation of a scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, if so, whether such conduct amounts to improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the Constitution and maladministration in terms of section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act.

5. THE INVESTIGATION

5.1. Methodology

5.1.1. The investigation was conducted in terms of section 182 of the Constitution and sections 6 and 7 of the Public Protector Act.

5.1.2. The Public Protector Act confers on the Public Protector the sole discretion to determine how to investigate complaints with due regard to the circumstances of each case.

5.2. Approach to the investigation

5.2.1. The approach to the investigation included an exchange of documents, analysis of the relevant documentation and consideration, as well as application of the relevant laws, regulatory framework, and prescripts.

5.2.2. The investigation was approached using an enquiry process that seeks to determine:

(a) What happened?

(b) What should have happened?

(c) Is there a discrepancy between what happened and what should have happened, and does that deviation amount to improper conduct or maladministration?

(d) In the event of a violation, what remedial action should be taken?

5.2.3. The question regarding what happened is resolved through a factual enquiry, relying on the evidence provided by the parties, and independently sourced during the investigation. Evidence is evaluated, and a determination is made

on what happened based on a balance of probabilities. In this case, the factual enquiry principally focused on whether the alleged conduct was inconsistent with the applicable prescripts.

5.2.4. The enquiry regarding what should have happened focuses on the law and/or rules that regulate the standards that should have been met by the functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD in the execution of their duties in relation to the subject of the complaint.

5.3. **Key sources of information**

5.3.1. Complaint letter, dated 14 November 2023;

5.3.2. Notice in terms of Rule 23(1) issued by the Public Protector to Dr T Gamede, the Acting Secretary for Defence dated 22 April 2024;

5.3.3. Notice in terms of Rule 23(1) issued by the Public Protector to Ms Phindile Baleni, Director-General and Secretary of Cabinet dated 02 May 2024;

5.3.4. Response letter from Mr WS Mbambo, Chief of the Air Force to the Public Protector, dated 16 May 2024;

5.3.5. Response letter from Ms P Baleni to the Public Protector, dated 12 August 2024;

5.3.6. Letters from the Public Protector Investigation Team (Investigation Team) dated 25 February 2025 and 28 May 2025 to Mr WS Mbambo requesting additional information;

5.3.7. Response e-mails from Ms Michelle Sendall, Deputy Director Administration, Office of the Secretary for Defence, to the Investigation Team dated 13 June 2025 and 30 June 2025;

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- 5.3.8. Letter from the Investigation Team to Dr T Gamede dated 30 July 2025, requesting a meeting;
 - 5.3.9. Response e-mail from Mr SM Motsepe, Supply Support Warrant Officer, VVIP Unit, to the Investigation Team regarding additional information and documents dated 15 August 2025;
 - 5.3.10. Response e-mail from Ms Sibongile Sambo from SRS Aviation to the Investigation Team dated 15 August 2025;
 - 5.3.11. Letter from the Investigation Team to Dr T Gamede, dated 20 October 2025, seeking clarification and supporting documentation; and
 - 5.3.12. Response letter from Mr WS Mbambo to the Investigation Team, dated 28 October 2025.
- 5.4. **Documents**
- 5.4.1. Copy of Cabinet Memorandum, dated 28 November 1994;
 - 5.4.2. Log Instruction 02/2010 Management of Hospitality Services in the Department of Defence;
 - 5.4.3. Presidential Handbook, November 2015;
 - 5.4.4. Copy of the contract entered between the DoD and K&P Projects and SRS Aviation JV on 04 October 2021;
 - 5.4.5. Updated flight bookings for His Excellency President Ramaphosa: 14 to 19 September 2022;
 - 5.4.6. South African Air Force VVIP Handling Request - WK021503K3 (Handling Request Form) for services dated 5 September 2022;

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- 5.4.7. E-mail correspondence dated 16 September 2022, from VVIP Catering to, amongst others, SRS Aviation (Pty) Ltd (SRS Aviation), regarding menu orders for breakfast and dinner for flight to the UK;
 - 5.4.8. Tax Invoice from Private Flight Concierge dated 18 September 2022;
 - 5.4.9. Updated flight bookings for His Excellency President Ramaphosa: 14 to 19 September 2022;
 - 5.4.10. SRS Aviation Tax Invoice dated 11 January 2023;
 - 5.4.11. New flight bookings for His Excellency, President Ramaphosa: 02 to 04 June 2023;
 - 5.4.12. New flight bookings for His Excellency, President Ramaphosa: 02 to 04 June 2023;
 - 5.4.13. E-mail from Ms Maria Shiko, New flight bookings for his Excellency, President Ramaphosa: 02 to 04 June 2023;
 - 5.4.14. Cabin crew request form for non-perishables and perishables, dated 02 June 2023;
 - 5.4.15. SAAF VIP Aircraft catering order, dated 02 June 2023;
 - 5.4.16. E-mail from Ms M Sibiyi, dated 02 June 2023, cancelling flight to Ankara, Turkey;
 - 5.4.17. Tax invoice from Par-Avion (Pty) Ltd - Cape Town Branch (Par-Avion) issued to SRS Aviation dated 02 June 2023;
 - 5.4.18. SRS Aviation Tax Invoice, dated 11 June 2023;

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- 5.4.19. Invoice dated 31 July 2023, indicating amounts payable for services rendered;
 - 5.4.20. Copy of SAAF Memorandum: Disposal of Food Items, dated July 2025, addressed to the VVIP Unit;
 - 5.4.21. Copy of the International Catering Waste- a Case for Smarter Regulation Report prepared by Food Control Consultants Ltd dated September 2018 (International Catering Waste- a Case for Smarter Regulation Report);
 - 5.4.22. South African Air Force Instruction MRI:020034 (Edition 1); and
 - 5.4.23. Copy of SRS Aviation Cancellation Policy.

5.5. **Meeting**

- 5.5.1. Meeting between the Public Protector's Investigation Team, Dr Gamede, officials of the SANDF and VVIP Unit on 07 August 2025.

5.6. **Legislation and other prescripts**

- 5.6.1. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 5.6.2. Public Protector Act 1994;
- 5.6.3. Public Finance Management Act, 1999;
- 5.6.4. Presidential Handbook, November 2015;
- 5.6.5. South African Air Force Instruction MRI: 020034 (Edition 1);
- 5.6.6. National Treasury Guidelines Instruction 01 of 2013/2014 on Cost Containment Measures; and

5.6.7. Cabinet Memorandum, No 2 of 1994.

5.7. **Notice issued in terms of Rule 41(1) of the Rules Relating to Investigations by the Public Protector and Matters Incidental thereto, 2018, as amended**

5.7.1. A notice in terms of Rule 41(1) of the Public Protector Rules, dated 14 November 2025, was issued to the Complainant, Dr Gamede and Ms Baleni.

6. **THE DETERMINATION OF THE ISSUE IN RELATION TO THE EVIDENCE OBTAINED AND CONCLUSIONS MADE WITH REGARD TO THE APPLICABLE LAW AND PRESCRIPTS**

6.1. **Whether the functionaries of the Presidency and the Department of Defence incurred exorbitant expenditure for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for a flight from London to South Africa and the subsequent cancellation of a scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, if so, whether such conduct amounts to improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the Constitution and maladministration in terms of section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act**

Common cause

6.1.1. On 15 September 2022, the President, President's delegation and other officials travelled from the Waterkloof Airforce Base on a working visit to Washington, DC in the United States of America (USA).

6.1.2. On 17 September 2022, the SAAF transported the President from Washington, DC to attend the state funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

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- 6.1.3. On 19 September 2022, the SAAF transported the President from London, United Kingdom (UK) to South Africa, following the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II.
- 6.1.4. On 02 June 2023, a flight was arranged with the SAAF to transport the President from Cape Town International Airport to Ankara, Turkey, to attend the inauguration of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (President Erdogan). The flight was subsequently cancelled on 02 June 2023.

Issue in dispute

- 6.1.5. The issue for the Public Protector's determination is whether the conduct of the functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD in procuring catering for the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for the flight from London to South Africa, and the cancellation of the scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, was at variance with the applicable prescripts regulating the usage of state resources by the Presidency when attending international obligations.

Complainant's version

- 6.1.6. The Complainant contends that several allegations are made against the Presidency for the unnecessary inflation of catering budgets; the alleged manipulation of catering costs to accommodate guests on both domestic and international trips, and the immense financial strain this has placed on the SAAF, which has been rendered ineffective due to the cost of exorbitant catering and severe financial mismanagement by the DoD. He further submitted that:
- 6.1.6.1 In 2022, on a 12-hour flight from London to South Africa alone, following the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, it is alleged that the total cost for catering for each VIP was R24 000.00, which amounted to R600 000.00 in total for fewer than 18 guests;

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- 6.1.6.2 A scheduled flight to Turkey in June 2023, cost the South African taxpayer R91 000.00 for catering that went to waste since the flight was cancelled;
- 6.1.6.3 Instructions were given to purchase a variety of expensive liquor to cater for certain VIPs on board the Presidential Aircraft, including luxury items such as Lindt and Ferrero Rocher chocolates, biltong and an entire chocolate cake, which was allegedly smuggled out of the aircraft by one of the guests; and
- 6.1.6.4 It is unacceptable that Mr MC Ramaphosa, the President of the Republic of South Africa (President) and his guests can spend exorbitant funds on catering and alcohol for travel, at the expense of the South African taxpayer, as thousands of ordinary South Africans are left to succumb to severe hunger and malnutrition.

Response from Ms Phindile Baleni Director-General and Secretary of Cabinet

- 6.1.7. On 02 May 2024, a Notice in terms of Rule 23(1) of the Public Protector Rules was issued to Ms Phindile Baleni (Ms Baleni) raising the allegations and soliciting a response. Ms Baleni responded in a letter dated 12 August 2024, stating, amongst others, that:
- 6.1.7.1. It is indeed correct that the SAAF transported the President from London, UK, to South Africa on 19 September 2022. However, the flight started on 15 September 2022, with a working visit to Washington, DC, USA, at the invitation of President Joe Biden;
- 6.1.7.2. Whilst the President was in Washington, DC, a decision was taken to attend the state funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth II, as South Africa was invited as a member of the Commonwealth;
- 6.1.7.3. A flight was also arranged with the SAAF to transport the President from Cape Town International Airport to Ankara, Turkey, to attend the inauguration of

President Erdogan in June 2023. The Invitation was received two (2) days before travel, and a decision was made to attend. However, the flight was cancelled while the President and the delegation were about to board due to the failure of the SAAF to obtain all flight clearances to allow the aircraft to depart.

- 6.1.7.4. The Presidential Handbook provides guidelines for the administrative, logistical, security and general support services to be rendered by the state to the President, his or her spouse, dependent children and the Deputy President and his or her spouse;
- 6.1.7.5. According to the Presidential Handbook, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is responsible for the air transport of the President. The cost of in-flight catering for the two (02) flights mentioned above was borne by the SANDF, and
- 6.1.7.6. All questions regarding the procurement of perishable and non-perishable consumables on the 02 flights should be directed to the SANDF.

Documentary evidence received from Ms Baleni

- 6.1.8. In support of her response dated 12 August 2024, Ms Baleni attached the following documentation:

Updated flight bookings for His Excellency President Ramaphosa: 14 to 19 September 2022

- 6.1.8.1. According to the flight bookings document dated 12 September 2022, signed by Ms Rerani Netshilima (Ms Netshilima), Deputy Director: Support Services to the President, addressed to the VVIP Unit, SAAF Flight Support Centre, Waterkloof Air Force Base, the President's flight bookings from Waterkloof Air

Force Base, to Washington, DC, to London and return, were scheduled as follows:

- (a) Wednesday, 14 September 2022 at 22h00, depart from Waterkloof Air Force Base for Gran Canaria Airport. The passengers for the flight were the President, Ms Baleni; Mr Steyn Speed (Mr Speed), Special Advisor at the Presidency; Mr Vincent Magwenya (Mr Magwenya), President's Spokesperson; Ms Netshilima, Ms Athi Geleba (Ms Geleba), Head of Communication in the Presidency, Mr Xolani Mthembu (Mr Mthembu), medical team and three (03) Presidential Protection Service persons (PPS);
- (b) Thursday, 15 September 2022, at 05h00, arrival at Gran Canaria Airport, and 07h30, departure from the aforesaid airport to Andrews Air Force Base, Washington, DC. Meals to be served. The flight was scheduled to arrive at the aforesaid Air Force Base at 10h00; and
- (c) Saturday, 17 September 2022 at 20h00 to be confirmed, depart from Andrews Air Force Base, Washington, DC, to London. Meals to be served.
- (d) Monday, 19 September 2022 at 18h00, depart from London to Waterkloof Air Force Base. Meals to be served.

New flight bookings for His Excellency, President Ramaphosa: 02 to 04 June 2023

6.1.8.2. According to the document dated 02 June 2023, the President's flight bookings from Cape Town to Ankara, Turkey and return were scheduled as follows:

- (a) Friday, 02 June 2023, to be confirmed, depart from Cape Town International Airport for Ankara, Turkey. The passengers for the flight

were the President, Mr Magwenya; Ms Geleba, Ms Malebo Sibiya (Ms Sibiya), Personal Assistant to the President: Mr Mthembu; medical team and two (02) PPS. Meals to be served;

(b) Saturday, 03 June 2023 at 12h00, arrival at Ankara, Turkey; and

(c) Sunday, 04 June 2023 at 10h00, depart from Ankara, Turkey for Waterkloof Airbase Force. Meals to be served.

Response from Mr WS Mbambo, Chief of the Air Force

6.1.9. On 22 April 2024, a Notice in terms of Rule 23(1) of the Public Protector Rules was issued to Dr T Gamede (Dr Gamede), the Acting Secretary for Defence, soliciting a response to the allegations.

6.1.10. A response was received from Mr WS Mbambo (Mr Mbambo), Chief of the Air Force, in a letter dated 16 May 2024, stating, amongst others, that:

6.1.10.1. A SAAF VIP aircraft was utilised to transport the President as per the Air Support Requests (ATR) received from the Presidency. The SAAF does not have any jurisdiction to question the purpose of any flight of the President and/or the Deputy President;

6.1.10.2. The Cabinet Memorandum Number 02 of 1994 (Cabinet Memo) which provides for the use of Military Air Transport by Political Office Bearers, Senior Government Officials and Departments as well as the Presidential Handbook, authorises and mandates the SAAF to provide air transport to the President in terms of the Constitution as the Head of State, Head of the National Executive and the Commander in Chief of the SANDF;

6.1.10.3. According to the Presidential Handbook, transport for the President and Deputy President is the responsibility and for the account of the state. Air transport for

the President and Deputy President is the responsibility, and for the account of the SANDF, which may use SANDF aircraft chartered by the SANDF for the purpose as cited in the Presidential Handbook;

- 6.1.10.4. The SAAF, through its *Very Very Important People* (VVIP) Unit, receives an ATR from the office of the President and/or the Deputy President detailing the departure and destination; the number of passengers, and other supplementary requirements or requests, if any, and, depending on the availability of the air assets, the mission is executed.

Catering for the President's trip to the UK

- 6.1.11. Mr Mbambo, stated *inter alia*, the following regarding the President's trip to the UK:

- 6.1.11.1 The allegation that the catering cost for the trip from London to Air Force Base (AFB) Waterkloof was R 600 000.00 is untrue. The catering cost provided by the contractor for the 12-hour flight was one hundred and thirty-nine thousand rand (R139 000.00). Other factors to consider were as follows:

- (a) The rand-to-pound exchange rate, which at the time was twenty rand and eleven cents (R 20.11) to one (01) British pound;
- (b) The average cost of living in the UK is approximately seventy nine percent (79%) higher than in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). Therefore, the expense for goods and services is higher in the UK than in RSA;
- (c) The Presidential Aircraft has set menus; and
- (d) The SAAF utilises an external contractor, which also most often contracts other service providers on the ground.

6.1.12. Mr Mbambo further provided the following documentation with respect of the President's trip to the UK:

E-mail from VVIP Catering

6.1.12.1. An e-mail correspondence dated 16 September 2022, from VVIP Catering to, amongst others, SRS Aviation (Pty) Ltd (SRS Aviation), has an attachment with menu orders for breakfast and dinner for flight number LMG1 EGSS-FAWK 19092022 and specifies the food items and quantities, which included fruit, vegetables, fish, chicken, red meats and fruit juices.

SRS Aviation Tax Invoice

6.1.12.2. Invoice number: 0001227 stating, amongst others, reference number 1473066-CATERING, dated 11 January 2023, with a due date 28 February 2023, for the service month of *Sep 22*, indicating the total for catering as R139 319.73, broken down as follows:

Description	Quantity	Excluding Price	Total excluding VAT	Total including 15% VAT
CAT001-Catering-Eggs	1.00	R104 048.11	R104 048.11	R119 655.33
CATA-Catering Arrangement	1.00	R 1 297.62	R 1 297.62	R 1 492.26
ADM001-Admin Fees	0.15	R105 345.73	R 15 801.86	R 18 172.14
			Balance due	R139 319.73

Private Flight Concierge Ltd

6.1.12.3. Tax Invoice from Private Flight Concierge dated 18 September 2022, with a due date of 09 October 2022 under reference number: INV-0449, indicating the total *four thousand two hundred and twenty pounds and ten cents (£4 220.10)* with a handwritten note of +12.5%. The invoice also listed the food items served

on the flight, which included fruit, salads, snack trays and chocolate cake served as dessert.

South African Air Force VVIP Handling Request - WK021503K3 (Handling Request Form)

- 6.1.12.4. Undated Handling Request Form indicating services required at arrival in the USA on 15 September 2022, which included, amongst others, catering.

President's trip to Turkey

- 6.1.13. Mr Mbambo, in his response, stated the following in relation to the President's official visit to the Republic of Turkey:

6.1.13.1 The flight to Turkey in June 2023 was not scheduled. The ATR was forwarded to the SAAF on Friday, 02 June 2023, at 10h00. At the time of the request, the Presidential Aircraft was in Cape Town on a Presidential tasking. The aircraft was planned to depart the evening of 02 June 2023;

6.1.13.2 The catering had to be ordered for the flight on short notice. Unfortunately, the trip had to be cancelled at around 22h00, due to overflight clearances not being obtained at such short notice. The catering was provided and had to be paid;

6.1.13.3 The Presidential Aircraft departed from Cape Town for AFB Waterkloof on 03 June 2023. A new catering order for the trip from Cape Town to AFB Waterkloof was placed;

6.1.13.4 It was established by the VVIP Unit after the trip that the stocktaking process on beverages was not being followed. The stocktaking process is currently being followed, and the administration process is being refined;

6.1.13.5 The statement that instructions have been given to purchase a variety of expensive liquor, including luxury items such as Lindt and Ferrero Rocher

chocolates, biltong and chocolate cake, is false. No alcohol is served on board any VVIP flight. This is as per the Guideline on Cost Containment Measures, National Treasury Instruction 01 of 2013/2014;

- 6.1.13.6 Regarding luxury catering, with specific reference to Ferrero Rocher and diabetic chocolates, all menus for each VVIP flight have a detailed description of the food items and are approved by the Presidency before each flight. It is difficult to determine the dietary preferences of passengers that might accompany the President; therefore, provision is made to cater for passengers who might be diabetic or have allergies;
- 6.1.13.7 Due process was followed by the functionaries of the SAAF for catering arrangements on board the Presidential Aircraft. The same process that has always been utilised to arrange a VVIP flight, including catering for all the VVIPs over the years, has also been followed for both the return trips from London to RSA as well as the Turkey trip, which was cancelled;
- 6.1.13.8 All non-perishable items that were on board the aircraft were returned to the VIP kitchen upon landing at AFB Waterkloof and can be accounted for. The meals (dinner) that were supposed to be served on the trip from Cape Town to Turkey could not be served to the President and his delegation, as the President flew back to Pretoria the following morning, and new catering (breakfast) had to be ordered;
- 6.1.13.9 The cancellation of the flight resulted in fruitless and wasteful expenditure with specific reference to Handling Fees, which included catering. The full amount for the catering that was ordered for Turkey had to be paid as the request was cancelled within twenty-four (24) hours, as per the foreign catering service provider's policy. Due to the short-notice cancellation of the trip, the SAAF was billed in full for the services that were booked;
- 6.1.14. Mr Mbambo provided the Public Protector with the following documentation:

E-mail from Ms Maria Shiko, New flight bookings for his Excellency, President Ramaphosa: 02 to 04 June 2023

- 6.1.14.1. In an email dated 2 June 2023 at 10:20, Ms Shiko from the Private Office of the President attached a “*Tasking Letter*” addressed to the VVIP Unit for purposes of preparation and planning.
- 6.1.14.2. According to the Tasking letter for preparation and planning, dated 02 June 2023, the President’s flight bookings from Cape Town to Ankara, Turkey and return were scheduled as follows:
- (a) Friday, 02 June 2023 to be confirmed, depart from Cape Town International Airport for Ankara, Turkey. The passengers for the flight were the President, Mr Magwenya, Ms Geleba, Ms Malebo Sibiyi, Mr Mthembu, Doctor, Medic and 2 x PPS. Meals to be served;
 - (b) Saturday, 03 June 2023 at 12h00, arrival at Ankara, Turkey; and
 - (c) Sunday, 04 June 2023 at 10h00, depart from Ankara, Turkey for Waterkloof AFB. Meals to be served.

SAAF VIP Aircraft catering order, dated 02 June 2023

- 6.1.14.3. VIP Aircraft catering order dated 02 June 2023, setting out the catering order for breakfast and dinner with Serial No WK021503MW, indicating catering delivery time 17h20 and departure of flight at 19h20, specifying the food items and quantities, which included fruit, vegetables, fish, chicken, red meats and fruit juices.

E-mail from Ms M Sibiya, dated 02 June 2023

6.1.14.4. The email dated 02 June 2023 sent at 22h19, from Ms Sibiya of the Presidency addressed to, amongst others, to Ms A Maraba of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) states that it is regretted to abort the travel to Ankara, Turkey. The efforts to secure overflight clearances was in vain and that the President will therefore no longer travel to Turkey.

SRS Aviation Tax Invoice, dated 11 June 2023

6.1.14.5. Invoice number: INV0001673 dated 11 June 2023 states, amongst others, the reference number CIN14228, with a due date for payment on 30 June 2023, for the service month of June 23.

6.1.14.6. The sub-total for catering, operational fees and administration fees as ninety-one thousand two hundred and seventy-eight rand ninety-three cents (R91 278.93).

Tax invoice from Par-Avion (Pty) Ltd - Cape Town Branch (Par-Avion) issued to SRS Aviation dated 02 June 2023

6.1.14.7. Invoice no. CIN14228 dated 02 June 2023, issued to SRS Aviation for catering services rendered by Par-Avion, indicates the total amount payable as eighty two thousand and thirty seven rand and eighty-four cents (R82 037.84), listing the food items catered for the flight, including salad, sodas, assorted fruit juices, chicken, fish, red meat, assorted desserts.

Table C (SRS Aviation Tax Invoice) 11 June 2023

Description	Quantity	Price	Excluding VAT Total	Including VAT Total
CAT001-Catering-Fact-LFMN	1.00	R71 337.25	R71 337.25	R82 037.84

OPER001-Operational Fees	1.00	R 820.00	R 820.00	R 943.00
ADM001-Admin Fees	0.10	R72 157.25	R72 157.25	R 8 298.09
			Grand Total	R91 278.93

Cabin crew request form for non-perishables and perishables, dated 02 June 2023

- 6.1.14.8. The Cabin crew request form dated 02 June 2023, listed perishables and non-perishables that could be requested from the caterers for the flight to Ankara, Turkey, including cold drinks, sparkling water, fruit juices, dried fruit, salad dressing, assorted teas, coffees, assorted biscuits, Ferrero Rocher and Lindt chocolates, spices, sauces and biltong. However, Ferrero Rocher and Lindt chocolates were not requested for the flight. Instead, 2 x 500g vacuum packed biltong, was selected as an item to be served on the flight.

Invoice: Administration System dated 31 July 2023

- 6.1.14.9. Invoice dated 31 July 2023, indicates an outstanding amount of R91 278.93.

- 6.1.15. Mr Mbambo further submitted that:

- 6.1.15.1 As far as possible, the SAAF utilises its own resources, such as the VIP kitchens at AFB Waterkloof and AFB Ysterplaat, to cater for VVIP flights. A VVIP aircraft is normally loaded with sufficient stock to minimise the cost to the state when operating from other bases. Disposal procedures for perishable items are conducted as per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of the VIP kitchen;

- 6.1.15.2 Perishable foods are disposed of after each flight. Non-perishable items are retained for the follow-up flights or returned to the VIP kitchen upon arrival at AFB Waterkloof. A SOP is appreciated to curb misconduct. Wherever possible, non-perishable items are stocked for the entire trip from the VIP kitchen at AFB

Waterkloof, however, with long-haul flights, this becomes a challenge as weight is an important consideration for safe and legal flight planning. This means that non-perishable items need to be ordered with the catering on return trips from a long-haul destination(s). This happened to be the case for the London trip.

- 6.1.15.3 Funds are allocated to the holistic flight, fuel, handling/airport services, catering, crew accommodation, and not separately. An external service provider is contracted for the arrangement of the provision of these services;
- 6.1.15.4 Invoices are registered and numbered accordingly at the VVIP Unit of the SAAF. Thereafter, the catering coordinator at the VVIP Unit verifies the invoices with what was ordered and delivered to the aircraft, and signs to confirm that the services were rendered. The Supply Support Officer then signs to confirm that the invoice has not been processed previously, then obtains signatures from the Budget Manager and Budget Holder, and the invoices are taken to the Procurement Section for payment; and
- 6.1.15.5 Perishable foods are disposed of, and non-perishable items are retained for future flights or returned to the VIP kitchen upon arrival at AFB Waterkloof. An SOP is in the process of being *appreciated*.

The Presidential Handbook, November 2015

- 6.1.16. The Presidential Handbook provides guidelines for the administrative, logistical, security and general support to be rendered by the state to the President, his/her spouse and dependent children, and the Deputy President and his/her spouse. The relevant sections of the Presidential Handbook are indicated in the legal framework below.

SAAF Instruction MRI:020034 (Edition 1)

- 6.1.17. The aim of the SAAF Instruction MRI:020034 (Edition 1), is to align all stakeholders to the process required to provide efficient, safe and professional air transport services to the Presidency. The relevant sections of the SAAF Instructions are indicated in the legal framework below.

Additional response from Dr Gamede, dated 12 June 2025

- 6.1.18. The Investigation Team addressed a letter dated 25 February 2025 to Mr Mbambo requesting a copy of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the disposal of perishable items, as well as a copy of Cabinet Memorandum No. 02 of 1994 (the Cabinet Memo).
- 6.1.19. Furthermore, on 28 May 2025, the Investigation Team requested a copy of the Foreign Catering Service Provider's Policy, since his response of 16 May 2024 referred to these documents.
- 6.1.20. When a response was not received from Mr Mbambo, the Investigation Team issued a Notice in terms of section 7(4)(a) of the Public Protector Act, 1994 (*subpoena*) to Dr Gamede, requesting the submission of the aforementioned documents.
- 6.1.21. On 13 June 2025, an e-mail was received from Ms Michelle Sendall (Ms Sendall), Deputy Director Administration, Office of the Secretary for Defence. Attached to the e-mail was a letter dated 12 June 2025 signed by Dr Gamede and an incomplete copy of the Cabinet Memo. Ms Sendall's letter stated that a copy of the SOP for the disposal of perishable items and a copy of the Foreign Catering Service Provider's Policy could not be found, and as such could not be provided.

6.1.22. On 30 June 2025, another e-mail was received from Ms Sendall and attached to the e-mail was a letter dated 01 July 2025 signed by Dr Gamede. Attached to this letter was a copy of Log Instruction 02/2010 Management of Hospitality Services in the Department of Defence and a complete copy of the c Cabinet Memo. The letter stated that the DoD does not have a copy of the Foreign Catering Service Provider's Policy in its possession.

6.1.23. Ms Sendall also submitted the following documents with the response from Dr Gamede:

Copy of Cabinet Memorandum, 1994 dated 28 November 1994

6.1.24. The Cabinet Memorandum authorises the use of military air transport by political office bearers, senior government officials and Departments.

Log Instruction 02/2010 Management of Hospitality Services in the Department of Defence (Log Instruction 02/2010)

6.1.25. The Log Instruction deals with the disposal of rations prepared by the SANDF kitchen for "living-in" and "living-out" members of the SANDF and no reference is made in the document to the SOP or the disposal of perishable items.

Meeting held with Dr Gamede and officials of the SANDF and VVIP Unit on 07 August 2025

6.1.26. On 30 July 2025, the Investigation Team wrote to Dr Gamede requesting a meeting with her and officials of the VVIP Unit who handled the catering services for the President's trips to London and Turkey; and to provide responses regarding the processes followed by the SANDF for catering services, as well as all documentation regarding the appointed service providers.

- 6.1.27. On 07 August 2025, a meeting was held between the Investigation Team and Dr Gamede and other officials from the SANDF and the VVIP Unit, including Mr Mbambo and Mr TL Phasha (Mr Phasha), the Officer Commanding VVIP Unit. Mr Phasha stated, *inter alia*, that:
- 6.1.27.1. The “*Foreign Catering Service Provider’s Policy*” which Mr Mbambo referred to in his response letter to the Investigation Team dated 16 May 2024, refers to the cancellation policy of the service provider, and it is not a DoD policy, hence Mr Mbambo stated that the “*policy*” is not in DoD’s possession;
- 6.1.27.2. Air Force Bases are geographically dispersed, and the bases provide support services for the squadrons that transport *the “principals”/VVIPs*. These services include safety and security, movement control, catering services, landing services, refuelling and ground support capabilities;
- 6.1.27.3. Catering services can either be provided by the VIP kitchen at the geographical Air Force Base, or it is procured through an appointed service provider nationally and internationally;
- 6.1.27.4. Since the Turkey flight was unscheduled, the SANDF procured the support services, such as catering services, through the appointed service provider, in this instance SRS Aviation;
- 6.1.28. These services were, *inter alia*, *functional services ancillary to the supply of the goods, such as transportation and any other incidental service such as catering, security and other such obligations of the supplier covered under the contract*;
- 6.1.29. Every national and international airport has companies approved to render support services, and these companies are called “Handling Companies”. These support services are procured through the appointed service provider, utilising the abovementioned APS contract;

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- 6.1.30. The catering services for the unscheduled flight to Turkey that was later cancelled, was procured through SRS Aviation utilising Par-Avion as the Handling Company. The flight had to be cancelled since only ten (10) of the fourteen (14) overflight clearances (official permission from a country's civil aviation authority for an aircraft to fly through its airspace without landing. This authorisation is essential for international flights, even if the aircraft doesn't intend to land in that country¹) were obtained due to the short notice of the Tasking Letter received on the morning of 02 June 2023;
- 6.1.31. The catering was requested by the VVIP Unit in preparation for the President's flight, and catering was provided and had to be paid in terms of the appointed service provider, SRS Aviation cancellation policy. The cancellation policy states that for cancellations of less than twenty-four (24) hours, 100% of the total order value must be paid;
- 6.1.32. Catering waste consisting of both leftover meals and beverages are subject to strict inspection, handling and disposal controls at all airports and Air Bases. Each country has its own legislation in respect of the handling and disposal of catering waste from international flights due to hygienic and health regulations;
- 6.1.33. The waste removal on board the Presidential Aircraft is done by the in-charge flight attendant on board, and the team always starts with cabin and galley cleaning and waste disposal preparations. The flight attendants ensure that the inboard waste is properly sealed and correctly prepared for disposal on arrival (landing) at AFB Waterkloof (Home Base).
- 6.1.34. For easy identification of waste, different colour sealable refuse waste bags are utilised for the disposal of both cabin and galley waste. Once the aircraft is safely on the ground, the dedicated VIP kitchen staff receives both sealed and readily prepared refuse waste and non-perishables items. The catering waste is removed from the aircraft, inclusive of international non-perishables, by

¹ <https://an.aero/a-comprehensive-look-at-overflight-clearance/>

dedicated VVIP catering personnel and disposed of in the allocated external bin area at VVIP Movements.

6.1.35. The non-perishable items are used for future flights. This is done in line with the guidelines provided for in the International Catering Waste - a Case for Smarter Regulation Report prepared by Food Control Consultants Ltd dated September 2028; a copy thereof was provided to the Investigation Team during the meeting of 04 August 2025.

6.1.36. *Mr Phasha submitted the following documentary evidence with his response:*

Contract between DOD and K&P

6.1.37. A copy of the contract entered into between the DoD and K&P Projects and SRS Aviation JV on 04 October 2021, titled the *Alternative Payment Solution for Aircraft Fuel and Airport Services for SAAF VVIP and Operational Aircraft operating away from SAAF Bases nationally and internationally*, for a period of three (03) years from 05 October 2021 to 04 October 2024 (APS contract), to render services and/or delivery of goods/commodities to the DoD.

Copy of the International Catering Waste- a Case for Smarter Regulation Report prepared by Food Control Consultants Ltd dated September 2028 (International Catering Waste- a Case for Smarter Regulation Report)

6.1.38. The Report presents recommendations and proposals that include changes to logistics, procedures and practices that also have the potential to significantly reduce the amount of international catering waste from an international flight,

Documentary evidence received from Mr SM Motsepe and Ms Sibongile Sambo

- 6.1.39. On 15 August 2025, the Investigation Team received an email from Mr SM Motsepe (Mr Motsepe), the Supply Support Warrant Officer, VVIP Unit. Attached to the e-mail was a copy of the SRS Aviation Cancellation Policy and the Invoice, dated 11 June 2023 for catering services rendered for the Ankara, Turkey flight.
- 6.1.40. On the same date, Ms Sibongile Sambo (Ms Sambo), from SRS Aviation, e-mailed a copy of the SRS Aviation Cancellation Policy.

SRS Aviation Cancellation Policy

- 6.1.41. The scope of the onboard catering cancellation policy for VVIP flights, states at par. 1 thereof that the policy applies to all confirmed onboard catering orders for VVIP flights provided by SRS Aviation;
- 6.1.42. Paragraph 3 of the said policy deals with Cancellations and Amendments of Charges, and provides:

To ensure quality and minimise waste, the following charges apply when orders are cancelled or significantly amended after confirmation:

<i>Cancellation period before Departure</i>	<i>Notice before</i>	<i>Cancellation fee</i>	<i>Amendment fee</i>
<i>More than 48 hours</i>		<i>No Charge</i>	<i>No charge (Domestic) Flights</i>
<i>24 to 48 hours</i>		<i>50% of total order value</i>	<i>20% of order value</i>
<i>Less than 24 Hours</i>		<i>100% of total order value</i>	<i>50% of order value</i>

All international flights' pre-paid fees for catering have a 100% penalty fee regardless of the notice period.

**Amendments include substantial changes to menu items, quantities, or delivery times.*

Invoice for catering

- 6.1.43. Invoice number: INV0001673 stating, amongst others, the reference number CIN14228, dated 11 June 2023, with a due date for payment indicated as 30 June 2023, for the service month of *June 2023*, indicates the food items, quantity and total amount (including VAT) for catering as R82 037.84.

Additional information received from Mr Motsepe

- 6.1.44. On 18 August 2025, the Investigation Team contacted Mr Motsepe and informed him that Log Instruction 02/2010 does not relate to the disposal of perishable items on board the Presidential Aircraft instead deals with the disposal of rations prepared by the SANDF kitchen for "*living-in*" and "*living-out*" members of the SANDF and requested him to provide the Investigation Team with the process followed in the disposal of perishable items on the said Aircraft.
- 6.1.45. Mr Motsepe provided the Investigation Team on the same date with a copy of a SAAF Memorandum dated July 2025, prepared by Mr Phasha, outlining the process followed for the disposal of food items on VVIP aircrafts.

SAAF Memorandum: Disposal of Food Items, dated July 2025, addressed to the VVIP Unit

- 6.1.45.1. The Memorandum confirmed the process being followed by the VVIP Unit in the disposal of inflight waste in line with the guidance provided for in the International Catering Waste - a Case for Smarter Regulation Report:

“Inflight waste disposing management preparations starts one hour prior to destination landing. The in-charge flight attendant on board and the team commences with cabin and galley cleaning and waste disposal preparations. To minimise the significant risk the flight attendants are to make sure that the inboard waste is properly sealed and correctly prepared for disposal on arrival (Landing) at Air Force Base Waterkloof (Home Base). For easy identification of waste, different colour sealable refuse waste bags are utilised for the disposal of both cabin and galley waste. Once the aircraft is safe on the ground, the dedicated VIP kitchen on duty staff will receive both sealed and readily prepared refuse waste and non-perishables items. The International catering waste (ICW) is removed from the aircraft inclusive of international non-perishables by dedicated VVIP catering personnel and dispose of it in the allocated external bin area at VVIP Movements”. (sic)

Additional Information received from Mr Phasha

- 6.1.46. On 20 August 2025, the Investigation Team telephonically consulted with Mr Phasha seeking clarity regarding the statement made in the response letter dated 16 May 2024 received from DoD, more specifically ‘paragraph b’ on page 2, which deals with the cancelled flight to Turkey and stating that *“it was established by the VVIP Unit subsequent to the trip that the stocktaking process on beverages was not being followed. The stocktaking process is currently being followed, and the administration process is being refined”*.
- 6.1.47. Mr Phasha clarified the statement by stating that:

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- 6.1.47.1. The stocktaking for the flight to Cape Town from AFB Waterkloof was done by the VIP kitchen. When the flight to Turkey was cancelled, the catering was already prepared and received by the cabin crew. Stocktaking was not done in Cape Town; however, the stock closure was done by the VIP kitchen when the aircraft landed at AFB Waterkloof;
- 6.1.47.2. Paragraph J on page 4 of the same letter states that *“perishable foods are disposed of, and non-perishable items are retained for future flights or returned to the VIP kitchen upon arrival at AFB Waterkloof. An SOP is in the process of being appreciated”*; and
- 6.1.47.3. The VVIP Unit uses guidelines as set out in the SAAF Memorandum dated July 2025, which deals with the disposal of food items and does not have an SOP dealing specifically with the disposal of perishable and non-perishable items on VVIP aircrafts.
- 6.1.48. The telephonic discussion was followed up by an email from the Investigation Team on the same day confirming the information received from Mr Phasha and no further communication was received.

Further response from Mr Mbambo

- 6.1.49. The Investigation Team wrote a letter on 20 October 2025 to Dr Gamede, seeking clarification and supporting documentation, regarding the following:
- 6.1.49.1. An explanation stating why catering services for the Turkey flight were procured prior to obtaining the necessary overflight clearance certificates;
- 6.1.49.2. As the Turkey flight was unscheduled, an outline in respect of the procedures followed in its preparation. If these procedures are governed by any policy or regulatory instrument, a copy to be furnished;

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- 6.1.49.3. Whether the stocktaking process is guided by any formal policy. If so, to provide a copy of the relevant document;
- 6.1.49.4. Details on how the DoD manages and mitigates risks of fruitless and wasteful expenditure, and how the fruitless and wasteful expenditure for catering for the cancelled flight to Turkey was dealt with; and
- 6.1.49.5. Copies of internal policies or directives governing procurement, cancellations, and financial accountability.
- 6.1.50. A response dated 28 October 2025, was received from Mr Mbambo wherein he stated, amongst others, that:
- 6.1.50.1. The ATR regarding the flight to Turkey was received on the morning of the estimated departure. Once the ATR is received from the Presidency for a particular tasking, all services required are obtained simultaneously. These services include all Airport Services (Handling), Aircraft Fuel, Catering, Overflight Clearances, Customs, Flight Planning, Crew, Transportation, Base Support and all unit personnel relevant to the tasking, to name a few. The obtaining of Overflight Clearances is not the determining factor that activates all other services to be obtained. Note that the cancellation of the tasking from the Presidency was received on the same day after all the services had already been activated;
- 6.1.50.2. As per the Cabinet Memo, SAAF through the VVIP Unit is responsible for the provision of Presidential Air Transport, including catering onboard for all Presidential missions. Procedures for obtaining services were followed as usual to any other Presidential requests. The only difference being that there was a time restraint due to the ATR being received on the day of departure. Catering requests and requirements for the trip to Turkey were sent to the catering company via the handling company. Specifications as coordinated

between the VVIP Unit Catering Coordinator, and the Presidency were provided, and a suitable selection was obtained;

- 6.1.50.3. The VIP Kitchen does not keep stock in storage or pre-procure catering. The procurement of catering for any flight is done once the ATR is obtained from Presidency;
- 6.1.50.4. The point of departure for any VVIP flight is the reception of the ATR from Presidency. Once the ATR is received, the VVIP Unit Catering Coordinator and the Presidency reaches consensus about the preferred catering specifications. The procurement process is then activated following the confirmation of the catering specifications by the requester;
- 6.1.50.5. This process is a mitigation process, as it ensures no pre-procurement of unnecessary items, and ensures that the VVIP Kitchen does not have any wastage. Furthermore, the VVIP Kitchen does not keep stock in place, except minimal amounts of water and soft drinks;
- 6.1.50.6. The cancellation of flights is not within the mandate of VVIP Unit, as such decisions are made by the Presidency or requester and are only executed at unit level. Arrangements to have services in place such as catering are made prior and, in some cases, cancellations occur;
- 6.1.50.7. The catering requested for the Turkey Flight was already received and was divided between the two aircrafts returning to Pretoria, the BBJ aircraft with the Principal and the Falcon 900 with the crew. All non-perishables were returned to the VVIP Kitchen for future utilisation; and
- 6.1.50.8. The cancellation policy between the contractor and contractee remains binding. With the cancellation happening at such short notice, full payment for services received was required as handling had already taken place. All catering

received is non-returnable, as per the cancellation policy of the service provider.

Notice issued in terms of Rule 41(1) of the Public Protector Rules

- 6.1.51. Rule 41(1) of the Public Protector Rules provides that when the Public Protector intends concluding an investigation by means of a closing report provided for in Rule 40(b), the Complainant shall be informed in writing accordingly and be given an opportunity to make representations in connection with the intended closure of the complaint within fourteen (14) days of delivery of the notification.
- 6.1.52. Rule 41(2) of the Public Protector Rules provides that the Public Protector may, if the Complainant has not responded within the prescribed time frame of fourteen (14) days, proceed with the closing of the file.
- 6.1.53. On 14 November 2025, a Notice in terms of Rule 41(1) was issued to the Complainant. On 17 November 2025, Ms Una Christians (Ms Christians), the Personal Assistant to the Complainant acknowledged receipt of the Notice on behalf of the Complainant. However, the Complainant did not make any further submission in respect of the matter.

Applicable law

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

- 6.1.54. Section 83 provides that the President:

“(a) is the Head of State and head of the national executive;

(b) must uphold, defend and respect the Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic;

(c) ...”

6.1.55. Section 195(1) of the Constitution provides that:

“(1) Public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including the following principles:

(a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.

(b) Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted; ...

(f) Public administration must be accountable.”

Public Finance Management Act, 1999

6.1.56. Section 1 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) defines fruitless and wasteful expenditure as expenditure made in vain that could have been avoided had reasonable care been exercised.

6.1.57. Section 38(1)(c)(ii) of the PFMA places a responsibility on accounting officers to prevent fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

Presidential Handbook, November 2015

6.1.58. The objective of the Presidential Handbook as encapsulated in the preface, is threefold:

“(i) To ensure the provision of reliable and consistent support required for The President and the Deputy President.

(ii) To provide a concise operational guide to relevant government departmental staff with clearly indicated responsibilities and duties, and by implication, lines of accountability.

(iii) *To provide the authority for the relevant civil servants to make decisions and to empower departmental staff with respect to what is approved, permissible and what may fall outside of the level of support required to be given to the President and Deputy President.”*

6.1.59. Clause 15, which regulates international transport of the President and Deputy President, provides that:

“15.1. Transport for the President and Deputy President during travel outside of South Africa is the responsibility, and for the account of the state.

15.2. The SANDF shall provide aircraft or charter for the purpose and bear the costs thereof for all international air transport of the President and Deputy President.

15.3. The President and the Deputy President have the prerogative to invite passengers to accompany him or her on the official aircraft designated for his or her use, provided that there is space to accommodate the additional passenger or passengers in addition to the security, medical and necessary Presidency staff.

15.4. Each guest passenger not employed by the state shall indemnify the state from any loss suffered by the passenger due to injury or otherwise.

15.5. Ground transport for the President and Deputy President during travel outside of South Africa is the responsibility of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) and is subject to the approval of the NSS.

15.6. The costs of ground transport, where not provided for by the host, are borne by DIRCO.

- 15.7. *The cost of in-flight catering on board SANDF aircraft utilised for the President and Deputy President is for the account of the Presidency, except where exigencies dictate otherwise, in which case the costs thereof are borne by SANDF.*
- 15.8. *For official purposes, private or commercial aircraft may be utilised by the Deputy President, only in special circumstances, and after consultation with NSS. For private travel, private or commercial aircraft may be used after consultation with NSS.*
- 15.9. *Should the Deputy President decide to make use of private or commercial aircraft for travel abroad for private purposes, the total flight costs of the Deputy President and his or her spouse shall accrue to the Deputy President, while the costs related to security arrangements, medical assistance and/or officials of government who have to accompany the Deputy President out of necessity are borne by the state.*
- 15.10. *For official purposes, private aircraft may be utilised by the President only in special circumstances, and after consultation with NSS.”*

South African Air Force Instruction MRI: 020034 (Edition 1)

- 6.1.60. Paragraph 6.2 of the SAAF Instruction provides that the Presidency represents the requirements of the President, Deputy President and previous Presidents, as well as Presidential envoys for whom flight services must be provided as per the approved Cabinet Memo.
- 6.1.61. Paragraph 6.7.3. states that the aircraft systems managed by the capability providers are provided from squadrons, namely: 2 Sqn (VVIP aircraft of BBJ, Falcon 900 and Falcon 50) and helicopter squadrons as required geographically: 15 Sqn (Durban), 87 HFS (Bloemfontein), 22 Sqn (Cape Town), 17 Sqn (Pretoria), 19 Sqn (Hoedspruit) and the Reserve Force squadrons of

111 Sqn, 110 Sqn and 104 Sqn. The chartering of South African registered aircraft will be considered as the last option to satisfy needs.

- 6.1.62. Paragraph 6.7.4. states that all the above squadrons operate from bases geographically dispersed. The bases provide the support services for the squadrons that transport the principals. These services include safety and security, movement control, catering services, landing facilities, refuelling and ground support capabilities. The VVIP Base Liaison Officer (VBLO) supplied by the bases is responsible for auditing the quality of preparations and verifying that all systems and capabilities are in order two (02) hours before the arrival of the principal.

National Treasury Guidelines Instruction 01 of 2013/2014 on Cost Containment Measures (National Treasury Guidelines Instruction)

- 6.1.63. Paragraph 4.25 of the National Treasury Guidelines Instruction provides that departments, constitutional institutions and public entities may not incur expenses on alcoholic beverages except for instances where alcohol is to be served at functions relating to:

- (a) state banquets;
- (b) the promotion of South Africa and any of its goods or services; or
- (c) The hosting of foreign dignitaries.

- 6.1.64. Paragraph 9(c) provides that the items of entertainment allowance do not include spending on alcohol, unless the purchase of such alcohol is in line with paragraph 4.25 of the National Treasury Instruction 01 of 2013/2014.

Cabinet Memorandum, No 2 of 1994

- 6.1.65. The Cabinet Memorandum provides for the use of Military Air Transport by Political Office Bearers, Senior Government Officials and Departments, and the Presidential Handbook authorises and mandates the SAAF to provide air transport to the President of the RSA in terms of the Constitution of the RSA as the Head of State, Head of the National Executive and the Commander in Chief of the SANDF.

Analysis

President's trip to the UK

- 6.1.66. The evidence before the Public Protector indicates that on 15 September 2022, the President, accompanied by members of his official delegation, departed from the Waterkloof Air Force Base aboard the Presidential aircraft, Inkwazi, to undertake an official working visit to Washington, D.C. Thereafter, on 17 September 2022, the President and his delegation proceeded to London to attend the State Funeral of the late Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Following the funeral, on 19 September 2022, the South African Air Force (SAAF) transported the President from London, United Kingdom, back to the Republic of South Africa.
- 6.1.67. The evidence further indicates that, in accordance with Clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the Presidential Handbook, the Presidency submitted an Air Transport Request (ATR) dated 12 September 2022 to the South African Air Force (SAAF), advising of the President's planned travel to Washington, D.C., thereafter to London, and returning to the Waterkloof Air Force Base, as well as requesting the provision of catering services for the President and his delegation. The ATR submitted by the Presidency in respect of the President's travel was processed by the SAAF in compliance with Paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction, which places, *inter alia*, an obligation on the

South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to provide the requisite support services for squadrons tasked with transporting principals.

- 6.1.68. Contrary to the Complainant's contention that the cost of catering on this flight from London to South Africa alone, following the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, amounted to R24 000.00 per VIP which in total amounted to R600 000.00 for fewer than 18 guests, the evidence before the Public Protector indicates that the actual catering cost for this flight, as reflected in invoice number INV0001227 for September 2022, was R139 000.00. This amount was paid on 17 February 2023 to SRS Aviation, in accordance with the tax invoice issued by the said company.
- 6.1.69. The procurement of the catering services and the payment thereof was made in line with the provisions of paragraph 15.7 of the Presidential Handbook, which provides, amongst others, that the cost of in-flight catering on board SANDF aircraft utilised for the President is for the account of the Presidency, except where exigencies dictate otherwise, in which case the costs thereof are borne by SANDF. This was also in line with Paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction, which provides, amongst others, that the SANDF should provide the support services for the squadrons that transport the principals. The services include safety and security, movement control, catering services, landing facilities, refuelling and ground support capabilities.
- 6.1.70. The evidence before the Public Protector, comprising the catering order for breakfast and dinner for flight LMG1 EGSS-FAWK 19092022 and the Tax Invoice issued by Private Flight Concierge dated 18 September 2022, indicates that no alcohol was served to the President or members of his delegation during the flights from Waterkloof Air Force Base to Washington, D.C., onward to London, United Kingdom, and the return journey. The provision of catering services on these flights complied with paragraph 9(c) of the National Treasury Guidelines Instruction, which expressly provides, inter alia, that entertainment allowance expenditures do not extend to the purchase of alcohol, save for

circumstances permitted under paragraph 4.25 of the said National Treasury Instruction.

- 6.1.71. The menu orders for dinner and breakfast, emailed on 16 September 2022 by VVIP Catering to, among others, SRS Aviation for flight LMG1 EGSS-FAWK 19092022, did not include any luxury items such as Lindt or Ferrero Rocher chocolates.
- 6.1.72. The evidence, specifically the Private Flight Concierge Tax Invoice dated 18 September 2022, demonstrates that contrary to the Complainant's assertion that an entire chocolate cake was "*smuggled out of the plane by one of the guests,*" the chocolate cake was merely served as a dessert on the flight to Washington, D.C. There is no evidence on record indicating that any perishable items, including chocolate cake, were removed from the aircraft by any passenger following the flight.

President's trip to Turkey

- 6.1.73. The evidence at the Public Protector's disposal indicates that on 02 June 2023, the Private Office of the President submitted a Tasking Letter to the South African Air Force (SAAF) requesting them to transport the President from Cape Town International Airport to Ankara, Turkey, for the purpose of attending the inauguration of President Erdogan on the same day in accordance with Clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the Presidential Handbook. The flight, however, was cancelled on 02 June 2023 at 22h19, which was on the day scheduled for departure to Ankara, due to the SAAF's inability to secure all necessary overflight clearances within the limited timeframe available for departure.
- 6.1.74. At the time of cancellation, catering services had already been procured from SRS Aviation, and, in accordance with the applicable cancellation policy, a cancellation made less than 24 hours before departure renders 100% of the total order value payable.

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- 6.1.75. The meals intended for service on the flight from Cape Town to Turkey were not served to the President and his delegation, as the President returned to Pretoria the following morning, necessitating a fresh breakfast catering order. Some of the catering originally requested for the Turkey flight was redistributed between the two aircraft returning to Pretoria: the BBJ aircraft carrying the President and the Falcon 900 carrying the crew and all non-perishable items were returned to the VVIP Kitchen for future use.
- 6.1.76. The full amount for the catering that was ordered for Turkey had to be paid as the request was cancelled in less than 24 hours, as per SRS Aviation's Cancellation Policy. Due to the short notice of the cancellation of the trip, the SAAF was billed in full for the services that were booked. Evidence in the form of an Invoice with number: INV0001673 indicates the sub total for catering R82 037.84 for the cancelled flight to Ankara, Turkey.
- 6.1.77. The PFMA defines fruitless and wasteful expenditure as expenditure made in vain that could have been avoided had reasonable care been exercised. In this case, catering services were procured after the ATR was received from the Presidency, which is the standard trigger for activating all related services, including catering, fuel, and overflight clearances. The DoD explained that the ATR was received on the morning of the estimated departure, and the cancellation occurred later the same day after services had already been activated. This indicates that the procurement process followed established procedures and was not initiated prematurely or negligently.
- 6.1.78. Evidence before the Public Protector indicates that some of the catering was utilised on two aircraft returning to Pretoria, and non-perishable items were stored for future use. These actions demonstrate an effort to mitigate losses and avoid complete wastage. The cancellation was outside the control of the VVIP Unit, as such decisions rest with the Presidency. Additionally, the full payment requirement was based on a binding cancellation policy agreed upon

with the service provider, which is a contractual obligation rather than an arbitrary expense.

- 6.1.79. On 14 November 2025, a Notice in terms of Rule 41(1) was issued to the Complainant giving him an opportunity to make representations in connection with the intended closure of the complaint within fourteen (14) days of delivery of the notification. Despite receiving an acknowledgement of the Notice, the Complainant did not make any further submission in respect of the matter.

Conclusion

- 6.1.80. Having considered the information and evidence obtained and the applicable legal framework, the Public Protector concludes as follows:
- 6.1.80.1. The procurement and payment for in-flight catering on the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft was in line with paragraph 15.7 of the Presidential Handbook, and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instructions, obliging SANDF to furnish support services including catering to the President;
- 6.1.80.2. Furthermore, catering orders and the tax invoice from Private Flight Concierge dated 18 September 2022 for flight LMG1 EGSS-FAWK from Waterkloof to Washington D.C., London, and return confirm no alcohol was served which is in line with paragraph 9(c) of the National Treasury Guidelines Instruction that prohibits alcohol in entertainment allowances except as permitted under paragraph 4.25; and
- 6.1.80.3. The expenditure relating to the cancelled flight to Ankara, Turkey could not reasonably have been avoided, as cancellation occurred due to the SAAF's inability to secure all necessary overflight clearances within the limited timeframe available for departure. The cancellation happened after services had already been activated in accordance with established protocols, including

clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the Presidential Handbook and Department of Defence procedures.

6.1.80.4. The full amount for the catering that was ordered for Turkey had to be paid as the request was cancelled in less than 24 hours, as per SRS Aviation's Cancellation Policy. The presence of a contractual cancellation clause further supports that the payment was unavoidable under the circumstances. The evidence shows that reasonable care was exercised, and mitigation steps were taken.

6.1.80.5. There is no evidence to indicate that the procurement of catering services by the SANDF for both trips was at variance with the provisions of clause 15.7 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.

7. FINDINGS

Having regard to the evidence, the regulatory framework determining the standard that the President should have complied with, Public Protector closes this investigation based on the following findings:

7.1. Whether the functionaries of the Presidency and Department of Defence incurred exorbitant expenditure for catering on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for a flight from London to South Africa and the subsequent cancellation of a scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, if so, whether such conduct amounts to improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the Constitution and maladministration in terms of section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act

7.1.1. The allegation that there was maladministration and/or improper conduct by functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD relating to expenditure for catering

on board the Inkwazi Presidential Aircraft for the flight from London to South Africa and subsequent cancellation of the scheduled flight to Ankara, Turkey, **is not substantiated.**

- 7.1.2. The functionaries of the Presidency arranged a flight for the President and his delegation from Waterkloof Air Force Base to Washington, DC, and further to London through an ATR dated 12 September 2022, in line with the provisions of Clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.
- 7.1.3. The procurement and payment for the catering services thereof were made in line with the provisions of Clause 15.7 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.
- 7.1.4. The functionaries of the DoD paid an amount of R139 319.73 to SRS Aviation on 17 February 2023, for catering services for the flight from Waterkloof Air Force Base, for Washington, DC and further on to London, and not R600 000.00 as alleged by the Complainant.
- 7.1.5. The functionaries of the DoD procured catering for breakfast and dinner to be served to the President and his delegates during the flight, which did not include alcohol, in compliance with paragraph 9(c) of the National Treasury Guidelines Instruction. The menu/catering orders for the flights did not include luxury items such as Lindt and Ferrero Rocher chocolates. Though 2 x 500g biltong was marked as a requested item on the Cabin crew request form dated 02 June 2023, for the flight to Turkey. Biltong is, however, regarded as a snack of cultural significance in South Africa, and seen as being part of the South African heritage and not necessarily considered to be a luxury item.
- 7.1.6. The President has the prerogative, in terms of paragraph 15.3 of the Presidential Handbook, to invite passengers on the official aircraft designated

for his use and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction make provision for catering for the President and passengers on the aircraft.

- 7.1.7. Perishable foods are disposed of in line with the SAAF Memorandum of July 2025, and non-perishable items are returned to the VIP Kitchen for use on future flights.
- 7.1.8. The functionaries of the Presidency arranged a trip from Cape Town to Ankara, Turkey, for the President and his delegates through ATR dated 02 June 2023, in line with the provisions of Clauses 15.1 and 15.2 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.
- 7.1.9. The procurement for the catering services thereof was made in line with the provisions of Clause 15.7 of the Presidential Handbook and paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 of the SAAF Instruction.
- 7.1.10. The functionaries of the DoD cancelled the flight on 02 June 2023 at 22h19, when the procurement for catering services was already made on the morning of 02 June 2023. As a result, an amount of R82 037.84 was paid to SRS Aviation for the aforesaid catering services, in compliance with paragraph 3 of SRS Cancellation's Policy.
- 7.1.11. The functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD complied with the provisions of section 195(1)(a), (b) and (f) of the Constitution when they procured catering services for the President and his delegation for the respective flights and subsequent cancellation of the trip to Ankara, Turkey. While the situation resulted in additional costs due to the cancellation, the evidence suggests that reasonable care was exercised, and mitigation steps were taken.
- 7.1.12. Accordingly, the conduct of functionaries of the Presidency and the DoD does not constitute improper conduct as envisaged in section 182(1)(a) of the

Constitution and maladministration as contemplated in section 6(4)(a)(i) and (ii) of the Public Protector Act, 1994.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1. The Public Protector considers this matter closed in terms of section 8(1) read with section 8(3) of the Public Protector Act and Rule 40(b) of the Public Protector Rules.



ADV KHOLEKA GCALEKA
PUBLIC PROTECTOR
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
DATE: 31 DECEMBER 2025

Assisted by Ms P Mogaladi
Executive Manager: Investigations Branch