

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY
QUESTION NUMBER: 1020 [NW1244E]
DATE OF PUBLICATION: 10 MAY 2013
DUE DATE TO PARLIAMENT: 24 MAY 2013**

1020. Mr T D Harris (DA) to ask the Minister of Finance:

(1) Why were SA Revenue Service (Sars) customs officials not present at the Waterkloof Airbase on 30 April 2013 to ensure that correct customs procedures were followed by the Gupta family;

(2) has the Sars Commissioner declared the Waterkloof Airbase a customs and excise airport in terms of section 6(1)(e) of the Customs and Excise Act, Act 91 of 1964;

(3) (a) who will be conducting the investigation announced by the Sars spokesperson on 1 May 2013 and (b) when will the investigation be completed?

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REPLY:

1) SARS Customs is present at the main commercial ports of entry of South Africa. As the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster statement of 19 May 2013 explains the Air Force Base, Waterkloof, has seven functions:

- The conduct of operations;
- The hosting of training flights;
- Receiving VVIP and VIP flights;
- Receiving foreign heads of state, envoys and dignitaries;
- Receiving registered military aircraft;
- Serving as a diversion airfield for commercial aircraft; and
- Conducting air shows

It is, therefore, not a commercial port of entry in normal circumstances. However, when necessary, SARS Customs would be called in to perform its functions. Whilst this did not happen initially, SARS management ensured that within hours as passengers in Flight JAI 9900 filled in Customs declaration forms.

The arrangements at Air Force Base, Waterkloof are currently being reviewed to ensure stronger Customs presence.

2) No, as the Air Force Base, Waterkloof, is not classified as an international airport. In terms of item 200.04 of the schedules to the rules of the Customs and Excise Act, the following 10 international airports were appointed by the Commissioner of SARS in terms of Section 6(1)(e). These are appointed in line with a Cabinet decision made in 1999.

- OR Tambo International
- Cape Town International
- King Shaka International
- Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport
- Lanseria International Airport
- Pilansberg International Airport
- Polokwane International Airport
- Bram Fischer International Airport
- Port Elizabeth International Airport
- Upington International Airport

3) Please refer to the JCPS statement of 9 May 2013. The SARS Management has been instructed to review the lessons arising from this event and make recommendations to the Minister of Finance on changes that need to be made to tighten and enforce customs control at relevant Ports of Entry.