

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY
QUESTION NUMBER: 1074 [NW2233E]
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1074. Dr M Q Ndlozi (EFF) to ask the Minister of Finance:

- (1) Whether any employee of the SA Revenue Service (SARS) was in an in-depth interview with a certain newspaper (name furnished) with regard to its investigation into the illicit tobacco economy between 1 January 2014 and 31 March 2014; if so, on what date was the interview conducted; if not,
- (2) whether the SARS communication section responded to questions sent to them by the specified newspaper with regard to the illicit tobacco economy; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) how did SARS respond to the questions and (b) on what date were the questions responded to?

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REPLY:

- (1) The current administration has no knowledge that any SARS employee held an in-depth interview with a certain newspaper. SARS employees are prohibited from disclosing any taxpayer information contrary to the provisions of Chapter 6 of the Tax Administration Act, 2011. This is an offence in terms of section 236 of that Act.
- (2)(a)(b) As at the date of providing this response SARS cannot locate a reply to a media inquiry to a certain newspaper during 1 January 2014 and 31 March 2014. It is however noted that in an article published by a certain newspaper on 20 March 2014 it is reported that *“Sars provided amaBhungane with general details of the work it has done to combat non-compliance in the tobacco industry, but did not comment on the specific incidents referred to in this article.”*