

Jamming not a political decision, says Mahlobo

By [Wyndham Hartley](#) and [Paul Vecchiatto](#)

20 Feb 2015

State Security Minister David Mahlobo says it was not an executive or political decision to use a cellular network jamming device that disrupted the start of President Jacob Zuma's state of the nation address last week...



(Image: Amityadav8, via Wikimedia Commons)

A statement issued on Wednesday by the Department of State Security said: "We wish to state that there was no executive or political decision to interfere with the free flow of information and constitutional obligations on transparency and openness during the state of the nation address. The minister responsible for state security was also taken aback."

The department's statement blamed a lower-ranking official for having left the jammer turned on, and said disciplinary steps would be taken against the individual.

Meanwhile, allegations of security force members standing outside the doors of the National Assembly, a string of points of order and objections, and thinly disguised insults yesterday marked the second day of the debate on Zuma's address.

Yesterday Zuma replied to the debate in which Democratic Alliance (DA) parliamentary leader Mmusi Maimane labelled him a broken man.

Proceedings of the joint sitting of MPs from the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) on Wednesday started with NCOP chair Thandi Modise announcing that the minutes of last Thursday were being revised to include a record of the jamming of cellular network signals.

The debate continued in a fairly civilised manner for most of Wednesday afternoon until the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) objected strongly to Justice and Correctional Services Minister Mike Masutha's comment on the powers of Parliament's presiding officers to ensure the security of the legislature.

"Even the defence force can be called in," he said.

This prompted the EFF MPs to object to the fact that he was speaking about a matter that was in contravention of parliamentary rules, as it was before the courts.

EFF leader Julius Malema said that his party had laid charges against Parliament, the presiding officers including National Assembly speaker Baleka Mbete, as well as the police, for the assault of his MPs sustained last Thursday, when they were forcefully ejected from the chamber.

Deputy NCOP chair Raseriti Tau struggled to make rulings as the EFF and African National Congress (ANC) MPs tried to speak over one another, with DA MPs also wading in at times.

Earlier, Public Enterprises Minister Lynne Brown announced that the first unit of Eskom's Medupi power station had reached its "optimal" speed of 3,000 revolutions a second [sic] and was on track for continued testing and synchronisation to the national power grid.

The commissioning of the first unit at Medupi is running at least two-and-a-half years late and experts have said it will take six more months before it will be fully operational.

Brown repeated the message that SA is not facing an electricity crisis, but a "challenge".

Source: *Business Day*, via I-Net Bridge

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>