

Parliament was 'under threat'

Government ministers on Thursday claimed there was a major security threat against the country's parliament...



Think you can bring a drone down or 'interrupt' and aircraft with a cellphone jammer? Think again. (Attribution: [Henrique Boney](#), via Wikimedia Commons)

State Security Minister David Mahlobo said at a media briefing various equipment and instruments had been deployed after security assessments had identified a possible threat to President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation address.

Defence Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said: "Let's not pretend there was no threat. There was a threat to disrupt Sona. We may differ in our conclusions about the extent of the threat."

But DA MP David Maynier said Mahlobo was simply engaged in damage control.

"The threat to disrupt parliament, or even embarrass the president, clearly falls outside the counter-intelligence mandate of the South African security services," Maynier said.

Another question raised was why were the jamming devices placed inside parliament.

Mahlobo was unable to give details about the device that caused the signal disruption.

He insisted the government never issued a "political or executive decision to interfere with the information flow".

"There was no jamming of the signal because if it was a jamming, there would have been a total shut down. There was a signal interruption."

Mahlobo said there was "unprecedented" intelligence that had been gathered regarding threats to parliament's safety, citing potential air strikes from low-flying aircraft as a reason for the device's use.

He said technology meant planes flying under the radar could go undetected but said with the device, "when you sense them, you can interrupt[sic] them".*

He also alluded to bombs being detonated by remote signal.

Mahlobo said the intention of the device had not been to jam cellphone communications.

This jamming had been a technical "glitch" that resulted from its use in "some" parts of the National Assembly.

He said an investigation had been set up to determine whether the jamming was deliberate.

President Jacob Zuma yesterday condemned the incident, saying it should never happen again.

Source: The Times, via I-Net Bridge

**The minister's claims have been rubbished by experts*

- **EWN:** [Experts rubbish Mahlobo's signal jamming claims](#)
- **hxt.co.za:** [Block a drone with a mobile jammer? Good luck with that](#)

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