

02 May 2020

**MINISTER OF COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE AND TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS
MINISTER OF POLICE**

Dear Minister

Re: **INTIMIDATION AND ABUSE BY MEMBERS OF SANDF**

1. As you are probably aware, we are an industry body that represents close one thousand members, most of whom are commercial landlords.
2. We have received a report from one of our members, which owns and manages a shopping centre in Middelburg, Mpumalanga, that, on Friday 1 May 2020, i.e. the first day of alert level 4, the following incident occurred.
3. At approximately 15h00, the centre manager was advised by security that the SANDF had arrived Middelburg Mall in two Casper vehicles, approximately 20 soldiers in all. They then proceeded to post members at each of the entrances - between 2 and 4 soldiers per entrance with a Captain in charge. At 15h20 the centre manager received a call from a shopper saying that his wife and children had been confronted in Jet and were about to be arrested. The centre manager then went straight to the Mall and was advised that the soldiers had left the woman with a warning. He then received a call from the centre's cleaning manager that a woman with a baby was told she was to be arrested but the soldiers similarly left her with a warning. The centre manager was then advised by the SANDF members that they would be returning the next day, i.e. Saturday 2 May 2020, and that they would ensure that no children or people without masks would be allowed to enter. They were all armed with R4 rifles and wore balaclavas over their faces.
4. We have obtained legal advice thereon and have noted that the regulations issued on 20 April 2020 by yourself in Government Gazette 43258 does not prohibit parents from having their children with them when shopping. In any event, the sale of children's clothing is permitted, and this will of course be very difficult to do if the children are not there to measure and fit the clothing.

SOUTH AFRICAN PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION – NPC – REG NO 1966/008959/08

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5. We strongly protest such seemingly unlawful, unconstitutional and intimidating behaviour by members of the armed forces who ought to protect the citizens, not harass, threaten and intimidate them.
6. We therefore implore you to urgently ensure that members of the SANDF and SAPS and other law enforcement agencies are advised not to act outside of their powers, but to instead adhere to and enforce the regulations as published.
7. Should you wish to engage with us further, you are most welcome to contact the undersigned.

N Gopal

Chief Executive Officer

SAPOA