



Annual ACTIVITY REPORT

2024/25

Independent and Impartial



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Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Independent and Impartial

OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2024/25

Date of tabling: ____ **JUNE 2025**



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Department:
Defence
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD GENERAL INFORMATION

This Office of the Military Ombud Annual Activity Report for the FY2024/25 is compiled using the latest available information to the Office.

For more information, please contact:

Ms Lindie Claassens
Deputy Director: Policy, Strategy and Planning

Physical Address: Office of the Military Ombud
Eco Origin
Block C4
349 Witch-Hazel Avenue
Centurion
0063

Postal Address: Private Bag X163
Centurion
Pretoria
0002

Telephone Number: 012 676 3800
Toll Free Number: 080 726 6283 (080SAOMBUD)

Facsimile Line: 086 523 2296

Email Address: communications@milombud.org
intake@milombud.org



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TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this document, the term “*the Office*” will always refer to the Office of the Military Ombud unless stated otherwise.

For the purposes of this document, the term “*the Act*” refers to the Military Ombud Act, Act No. 4 of 2012, unless otherwise specified.

For the purposes of this document, the term “*the South African Military Ombud*” will always refer to the Military Ombud, unless stated otherwise.



GLOSSARY

List of abbreviations used in the Office of the Military Ombud Annual Activity Report:

AAR	Annual Activity Report
AFB	Air Force Base
AOMA	African Ombudsman and Mediators Association
APP	Annual Performance Plan
BOI	Board of Inquiry
COE	Compensation of Employees
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
C HR	Chief of Human Resources
CHM	Complaints Handling Manual
C SANDF	Chief of the South African National Defence Force
CSS	Core Service System
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
Def Int	Defence Intelligence
DLS	Directorate Legal Support
DLSD	Defence Legal Services Division
DOD	Department of Defence
EXCO	Executive Committee
Fin	Finance
FY	Financial Year
GPAA	Government Pensions Administration Agency
GRC	Governance, Risk and Compliance
GTAC	Government Technical Advisory Centre
HSPT	Hoedspruit
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGR	Individual Grievances Regulations
IOE	International Ombudsman Expo
IOI	International Ombudsman Institute
J Ops Div	Joint Operations Division
LOG	Logistics
Log Div	Logistics Division
MANCO	Management Committee
MLP	Military Law Practitioner
MOA	Memoranda of Agreement
MOD&MV	Minister of Defence and Military Veterans
MP Div	Military Police Division



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MSDS	Military Skills Development System
MOU	Memoranda of Understanding
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism
NT	National Treasury
OHO	Office of the Health Ombud
OSD	Occupation-Specific Dispensation
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information
PFMA	Public Management Finance Act
RBM	Results-Based Model
RFMCF	Regular Force Medical Continuation Fund
SAAF	South African Air Force
SA Army	South African Army
SA Army Gym	South African Army Gymnasium
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAI	South African Infantry
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAMHS	South African Military Health Services
SAPS	South African Police Service
SAS	South African Ship
SASSETA	Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMS	Senior Management Service
SONA	State of the Nation Address
SP	Strategic Plan
SPT	Sub-committee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment



FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS, THE HONOURABLE MS M.A. MOTSHEKGA, MP



I am pleased to present the Office of the South African Military Ombud's Annual Activity Report for the financial year 2024/25. The Report provides a strategic overview of the Office's performance outcomes within the allocated budget.

South Africa faces several interconnected development challenges that cannot be successfully addressed by Government efforts alone. Effective resolution of these challenges demands a holistic approach involving collaborative partnerships across the public, private, and civil society. These partnerships are essential to improving the lives of ordinary South Africans. Their success depends in large part on the existence of a safe and secure environment for citizens and businesses.

In this context, a well-managed and governed Defence Force is critical for promoting social stability by enhancing peace and security for the country and Africa. The Office plays a role in building an ethical, capable and professional Defence Force through its commitment to the ethos of accountability and transparency. This has led to improved governance and better handling of the conditions of service of Defence Force members.

The Office maintains its focus on the primary objective of improving coordination, accountability, and governance in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Notably, in its role as a force multiplier, the Office has successfully resolved complaints emanating from SANDF members and the public, which has contributed to low levels of litigation regarding the service conditions of members. The Office has also ensured successful outcomes regarding reinforcing fundamental human rights in the civil-military architecture. For example, it has also positioned itself to contribute to combating the scourge of gender-based violence in the Defence Force through workshops and training staff members in dealing with cases of harassment.

The 7th Administration will continue to sustain the momentum of reforms while building inclusivity as articulated in the National Development Plan and Strategic Priority 3, which seeks to build a capable, ethical, and developmental state. Public participation and trust hinge on the belief that the government acts in the best interests of its citizens. This belief encourages citizen engagement, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability, leading to increased support for government initiatives. As such, the Ministry is committed to prioritising processing the Military Ombud's reports and has seen improvements in implementing the Office's recommendations.

Furthermore, the Ministry supports the Office embedding key enablers and interlinkages, including strong leadership and governance, and streamlined processes and procedures that facilitate efficiency whilst contributing to effective institutional capacity.



Notably, the Office of the Military Ombud demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing the Revised 2019-2024 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) Apex Priorities of Government. During the year under review, the Office provided both direct and indirect support for the following MTSF Apex Priorities:

- **MTSF Apex Priority 1: “A Capable, Ethical and Developmental State”.** The Office implemented national and departmental policies and strategies, ensuring effective, efficient and economical resource administration and support services.
- **MTSF Apex Priority 3: “Education, Skills and Health”.** The Office provided opportunities for Internships in partnership with the Department of Defence and the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority to support national skills development. Office members could study and attend skills training courses to enhance their knowledge, ensuring effective and efficient service delivery.
- **MTSF Apex Priority 6: “Social Cohesion and Safer Communities”.** The Office continued with extensive Outreach Programmes to educate and raise awareness about the legislative mandate of the Office among members and former members of the SANDF and the Public.
- **MTSF Apex Priority 7: “A Better Africa and World”.** One of the Office’s unique strengths is its capacity to manage knowledge and lessons learned and participate in international engagements. The office is an active participant and member of the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association and the International Ombudsman Institute. It has continued to strengthen relations between the Office and its stakeholders.

It is important to note that work commenced on the development of the Revised Level of Defence Ambition with a focus on the development of the following, which the Chief of the SANDF has termed the “*Journey to Greatness*”:

- A Future Republic of South Africa Defence and Security Policy Concept, cognisant of the emerging security environment and the Defence Function’s constraints.
- A Future Military Capstone Concept that will provide the strategizing concepts for pursuing our national defence and security policy.
- The Chief of the SANDF’s Long-Term Capability Development Strategic Plan will direct the development path of the SANDF for the next twenty years.

The journey ahead of us encompasses the pursuit of Promoting Nation-Building through constructing a common national identity, coupled with values and ethics that reinforce it. We also strive to safeguard the nation and contribute to internal stability by strengthening the state institutions. Finally, the journey involves securing regional development by creating conducive conditions that are secure and stable.

The Office of the Military Ombud is essential in promoting good governance and the rule of law within the SANDF. Through democratic governance, fairness, and transparency, the Office ensures that the necessary checks and balances are in place to aid the SANDF in remaining relevant and ready to meet future administrative and operational challenges.



In conclusion, the performance of the Office of the Military Ombud demonstrates the need for unwavering support of its mission as it executes complaint resolution processes and tasks. The Office has continually met and even surpassed its defined targets.

Thus, it is encouraging and commendable to indicate that by successfully resolving complaints as per mandate, the Office plays a pivotal role in the Security Sector Governance space.

This report illustrates the importance of meeting the pacing challenge presented by the evolving conditions of service experienced as per the Office of the Military Ombud's mandate. It also provides an overview of the Office's financial information and preliminary summary-level performance results.

Lastly, I thank the Military Ombud, Lieutenant General (Retired) V.R. Masondo and his team for their sterling work and outstanding service delivery, ensuring the Office remains a reliable, fair, independent, and impartial complaints redress channel.

(HONOURABLE MS M.A. MOTSHEKGA, MP)
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND MILITARY VETERANS, MP

Date: 29 May 2025



FOREWORD BY THE MILITARY OMBUD, LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED) V.R. MASONDO



It is a great honour to present the Office of the South African Military Ombud Annual Activity Report for the 2024/25 Financial Year. The report outlines, amongst other things, the activities that we have achieved during the reporting financial year.

The Office of the South African Military Ombud was created under the Military Ombud Act, Act No. 4 of 2012 to investigate written complaints from serving and former members of the Defence Force regarding their conditions of service, and from members of the public regarding the official conduct of South African National Defence Force (SANDF) members on duty. The Office is thus a part of the system of democratic governance that aims to build and maintain an ethical and capable state with well-governed institutions.

Complaint resolution processes support the realisation of democratic dividends for the Republic of South Africa by acknowledging that Defence Force members are “*citizens in uniform*”. This principle recognises that Defence Force members do not sacrifice their fundamental human rights when they join the military. Instead, these rights must be carefully balanced with the responsibilities of the Defence Forces, which in turn must be fairly executed in relation to members of the public. Therefore, the Office is imperative in maintaining this balance by fairly, impartially, and expeditiously addressing complaints from members, former SANDF members, and the public. The Office has enhanced its visibility and relevance through various stakeholder outreach and trust-building activities. These activities increase awareness of the Office and its complaints management activity, ensuring that concerns are surfaced for investigation and resolution. Key activities during the year included the Annual Military Ombud Symposium, the International Ombud Expo in Botswana, and related education and awareness programmes. Our Outreach Programme was conducted in each province, and military bases and key exhibitions were identified at Presidential Imbizos. These initiatives, combined with electronic media, have achieved the desired effect of bolstering legitimate complaints received by the Office from both SANDF members and members of the public. Furthermore, the number of complaints relating to the official conduct of the members of the SANDF is gradually declining, which can be partly attributed to the outreach education that we have intensified at military bases.

The Office continues to receive complaints from serving members of the SANDF, primarily regarding their service benefits and terminations of service. Given the investigative nature of complaints, every complainant is entitled to a fair hearing before we arrive at a finding through applying the law and emergent policies. The Republic of South Africa Constitution, Act 108 of 1996, enshrines the rule of “*audi alteram partem*” as a fundamental principle of our law. The legitimate requirement to accord all parties to a complaint representation and response often leads to carry-over cases and late resolution turnaround times. However, through complaints resolution mechanisms such as Mediation and Liaison Forums, we have substantially reduced carry-over cases and lessened turnaround times to finalise all cases



within the set targets during the reporting period. It is also worth stating that the turnaround time for complaint resolution has improved despite having open vacancies, where we have lost staff due to new opportunities inside and outside of the Office. To capacitate staff and management, we have invested in several regional and international training interventions that are seminal for empowerment and support, promoting mitigatory and intervention practices, and more effective and efficient complaints resolution.

The Office has also demonstrated that in the financial year 2024/25, we have increased our outreach events to members of the public. This informs them of our mandate and their rights when interacting with SANDF members on official duty. The roadshows, exhibitions, and national day celebrations have been instrumental in expanding our reach to the public. Through the commissioned Stakeholder Perception Survey, plans are also underway to gauge stakeholder views on service delivery and perception. It is against this background that I also wish to reiterate that our collective focus areas for financial year 2025/26 remain the same, whilst supporting the National Government of Unity Medium-Term Development Plan 2024-2029 Priorities and the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans Priorities:

- Effective and efficient resolution of complaints.
- Implementation of the Integrated Communication Marketing Strategy and Plan.
- Institutional independence.
- Institutionalisation of the Governance, Risk Management and Compliance Framework.
- Securing adequate funding for the Compensation of Employees.
- Resource Management.
- Operationalising the Ministerial Policy Directive on Enterprise Resource Support to the Military Ombud.

The Office continues participating in international events in line with Security Sector Governance, wherein member states are invited to share best practices and their experience. In our last participation at the annual International Conference of Ombuds Institutions for the Defence Forces, the country was nominated to host the event in October 2025. The lessons learned in these interactions consistently empower the Office to best conduct its business within universally accepted principles of complaint resolution, such as impartiality, fairness, accountability, and neutrality.

Let me also take this moment to appreciate the unequivocal support that the Office receives from the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans. I thank the Deputy Military Ombud, Management, and Staff Members for their commitment to ensuring they serve all our stakeholders following Batho Pele Principles and selfless service delivery.

(LIEUTENANT GENERAL [RETIRED] V.R. MASONDO)
MILITARY OMBUD

Date: 07 May 2025



STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY AND CONFIRMATION OF ACCURACY

To the best of my knowledge and belief, I confirm the following:

- All information and amounts disclosed throughout the Annual Activity Report are consistent.
- The Annual Activity Report is complete, accurate, and free from omissions.
- The Annual Activity Report has been prepared following the guidelines on Annual Reports issued by the National Treasury.
- The Financial Report herein reflects expenditure incurred per relevant legislation, instructions, policies and prescripts.

In my opinion, the Annual Activity Report accurately reflects the operations, performance information, human resources information, and financial affairs of the Office of the Military Ombud for the fiscal year 2024/25.

(LIEUTENANT GENERAL [RETIRED] V.R MASONDO)
MILITARY OMBUD

Date: 07 May 2025

PART



A



STRATEGIC OVERVIEW



LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

The Office derives its mandate from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Chapter 2, Bill of Rights and Chapter 3, Co-operative Government. The mandate of the Office is captured in the Military Ombud Act, Act No. 4 of 2012, which states that *“the Office is to investigate complaints lodged in writing by –*

- *a member regarding his or her conditions of service;*
- *a former member regarding his or her conditions of service;*
- *a member of the public regarding the official conduct of a member of the Defence Force;*
or
- *a person acting on behalf of a member”.*

The regulatory framework governing the Office is reflected below:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.
- Military Ombud Act, 2012 (Act No. 4 of 2012).
- Military Ombud Complaints Regulations, 2015.
- Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999).
- Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995).
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997).
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No. 3 of 2000).
- Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000).
- Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013).

UPDATES ON THE RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY MANDATES

Military Ombud Act, Act No. 4 of 2012. During the FY2021/22, the Office initiated the legislative process for amending the Act. Even though the Act stipulates that the Office is an independent body, the Office continued to experience institutional and operational independence challenges¹.

Further consultation was conducted between the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans (MOD&MV) and the Military Ombud to address the appropriate Institutional Independence Model for the Office. The Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC) was appointed to conduct a feasibility study on the most suitable independence model for the Office, which led to the requirement for an amendment to the Act.

¹ Institutional and Operational Independence. Although the Military Ombud must account for all monies received or paid by the Office, it does not have self-accounting status. It therefore operates independently of the Department of Defence (DOD). Operational support from the DOD is limited and inadequate to meet the Office's operational requirements promptly and efficiently. The Office relies on Ministerial Directives, Service Level Agreements (SLAs), and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to enhance the position of the Office, which is fraught with risks, even more so in the fact that a good relationship between the incumbents does not necessarily guarantee cooperation by the members and officials involved.

The GTAC report identified the need for enhancement regardless of the organisational form, and a budget increase will have to be considered in any event. The Office will continue to engage with the MOD&MV during FY2025/26 to advance the legislative process for amending the Act.



VISION

To be a trusted, independent, impartial and expeditious Military Ombudsman Institution that upholds fairness, transparency and ethical governance, contributing to professionalism, inclusivity and accountability within the SANDF.



MISSION

To investigate complaints, protect the fundamental rights of SANDF members, former members and the public and drive systemic reforms to enhance accountability, good governance and service conditions within the SANDF.



ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

The Office of the Military Ombud has committed to values rooted in individual values, the Office's code of conduct and organisational cohesion.

- **Confidentiality.** We ensure all information is treated with confidentiality.
- **Accountability.** We are responsible for our decisions and actions.
- **Impartiality.** We aim for fairness by balancing conflicting interests and fundamental rights.
- **Integrity.** We value ethical conduct and honesty.
- **Transparency.** We strive to be open and strike a balance of fairness.

INDIVIDUAL VALUES

In support of the organisation's values, the following supporting values have been institutionalised within the Office:

- **Commitment.** We are dedicated to achieving the organisation's objectives.
- **Teamwork.** We take joint responsibility through teamwork.
- **Courtesy.** We continue to show politeness, attitude and behaviour towards stakeholders.
- **Professionalism.** We aim to provide the highest quality service to all stakeholders.

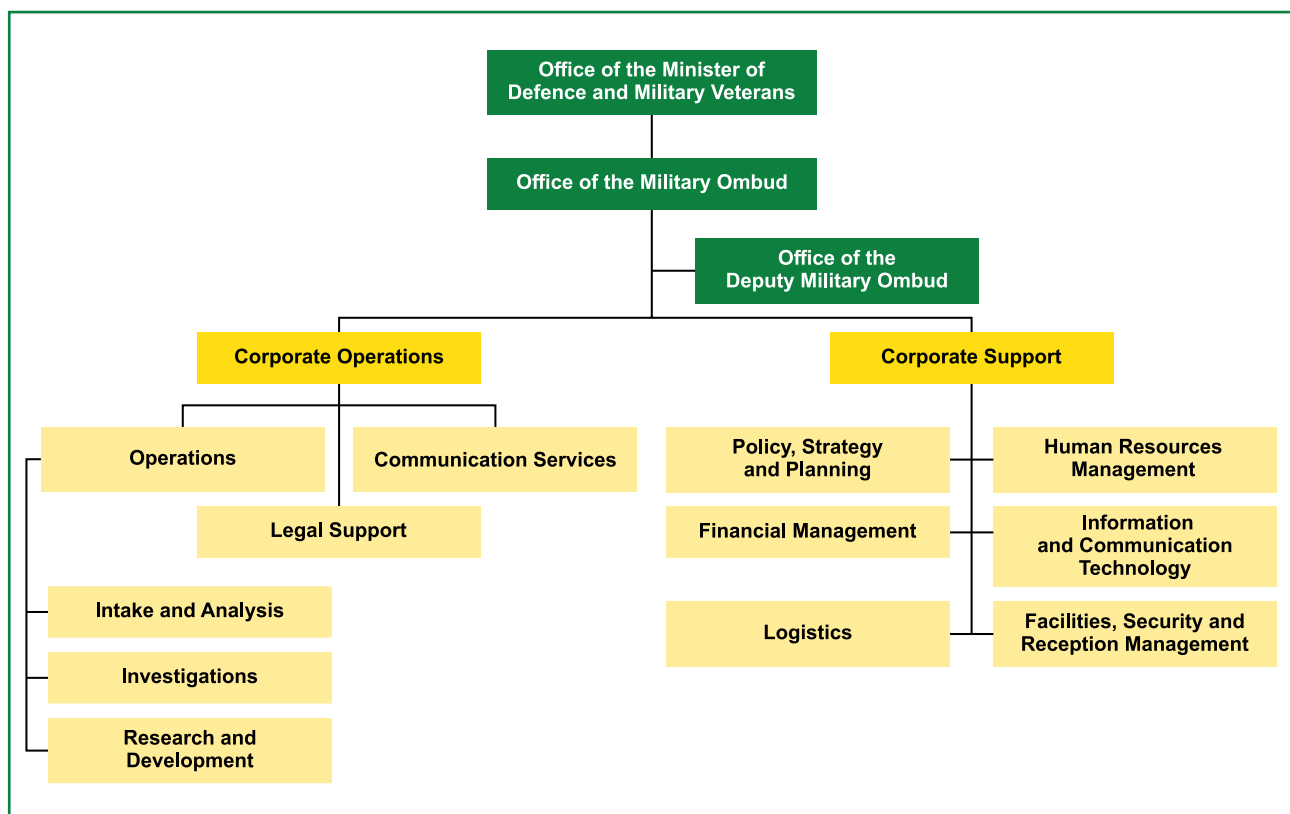


ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Office's organisational structure, illustrated in Figure 1, is designed to align with its current mandate, vision, outcomes and outputs, enabling the effective execution of its responsibilities. The structure currently consists of 89 positions, with 66% dedicated to the Office's core business (resolution of complaints) and 34% to corporate support staff. As previously mentioned, the ongoing challenges of accounting authority and independence persist.

The MOD&MV approved a Ministerial Directive to boost the Office's independence and enhance operational efficiency. Despite rigorous efforts, implementation has been challenging, and the Office continues to seek solutions to address these critical issues.¹

Figure 1. Office of the Military Ombud Organisational Structure



¹ Operationalising the Ministerial Policy Directive on Enterprise Resource Support to the Office, signed by the MOD&MV N.N. Mapisa-Nqakula on 25 October 2018. DOD and the Office Workgroup will continue developing solutions and implementing the Ministerial Policy Directive. The implementation of the Ministerial Policy Directive remains a challenge.

PART



B



PERFORMANCE INFORMATION



OFFICE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Military Ombud Annual Activity Report (AAR) for FY2024/25 is a strategic report on the progress made with the implementation of the Revised 2019–2024 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) (endorsed during a Cabinet Lekgotla in September 2021 and implemented on 01 October 2021) and annual performance against set targets in investigating complaints and ensuring sound administration and management of the Office. The Military Ombud provided strategic direction to the Office, facilitating its overall management and administration.

During the period under review, the Office progressed in many areas against its set focus areas. The Office continued improving its turnaround times in resolving complaints, promoting its image and services through Outreach Programmes and community engagements to increase awareness of its mandate. The Office uses programmes such as Presidential Imbizos, National Days and Community Radio Station Interviews, complemented by Outreach Programmes for soldiers deployed along the borders of South Africa and members of the public to create awareness of its mandate.

ORGANISATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The Military Ombud provides the Office with strategic direction and sets out focus areas to be pursued over multiple MTSF periods. Executing these focus areas enhances the effective realisation of the Military Ombud mandate. The Military Ombud indicated that the Office's focus during FY2024/25 should be finalising the implementation and execution of the five-year programme as outlined in the Office of the Military Ombud's Strategic Plan for 2020-2025.

In the execution of the five-year programme, the following Military Ombud Focus Areas were applied:

- **Military Ombud Focus Area 1: Effective and Efficient Resolution of Complaints.**
 - Improve turnaround times systematically and efficiently to reduce carry-over complaints.
 - Identification and reporting on systemic issues arising from complaints.
- **Military Ombud Focus Area 2: Implementing the Integrated Communication Marketing Strategy and Plan.**
 - Outreach Programmes;
 - Create Public Awareness;
 - Stakeholder Relationship Management;
 - Stakeholder Perception Survey;
 - International Relations; and
 - Branding and Marketing.



- **Military Ombud Focus Area 3: Institutional Independence.** Positioning the Office to ensure effective execution of its mandate through a legislative review process and an Amendment Bill. This process includes continuing the GTAC study concerning the most appropriate institutional form for the Office. The purpose is to ensure that all challenges experienced by the Office are addressed in the Military Ombud Amendment Bill.
- **Military Ombud Focus Area 4: Operationalising the Ministerial Policy Directive on Enterprise Resource Support to Military Ombud as Signed on 25 October 2018.** DOD and the Office of the Military Ombud Workgroup will continue developing solutions and implementing the Ministerial Policy Directive.
- **Military Ombud Focus Area 5: Institutionalisation of the Governance, Risk and Compliance Framework.** To ensure accountable and effective management of resources through an enterprise risk management approach.
- **Military Ombud Focus Area 6: Securing Adequate Funding for the Compensation of Employees (COE).** Since the Office budget became a line item on the DOD budget, numerous requests were submitted to the DOD explaining that the allocation did not fulfil the requirement.
- **Military Ombud Focus Area 7: Resource Management.** To ensure accountable, effective, and efficient resource management aligned with the regulatory framework (Human Resource [HR], Logistics [Log], Finance [Fin] and Information and Communication Technology [ICT]) and accountability documents.

HIGHLIGHTS

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Office achieved several notable milestones across its functions. The Office continued to fulfil its legislative mandate to investigate complaints, building on ongoing improvements that have resulted in fewer carry-over complaints and shorter investigation turnaround times. A total of 662 complaints were handled, including 72 carried over from the previous year, with 593 successfully resolved. Operationally, the Office co-hosted an Investigator Training Workshop on harassment in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF).

The Legal Support Directorate consistently exceeded performance targets, achieving between 89% and 99% for legal advisory and report review functions. It also participated in National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) inspection visits in Gauteng, Bloemfontein, and Wynberg.

Regarding Corporate Support, the AAR for FY2023/24 was submitted, approved, and tabled in Parliament. The Strategic Plan (2025–2030) and APP for the 2025/26 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) were submitted to the MOD&MV. The ICT section ensured 100% network uptime, and all service payment invoices were finalised and submitted to the Department of Defence (DOD). Training targets were significantly exceeded, with 85 officials attending various development courses, including harassment prevention, acquisition, personnel systems, and project management.



Additionally, appointing a new Director of Legal Support and Reserve Force call-ups further strengthened capacity.

The Office engaged actively with stakeholders, hosting key figures such as the MOD&MV, her deputies, and Mozambique's Ombudsman. Internationally, it made significant contributions at the Second International Ombud Expo in Botswana and participated in key DCAF engagements in Switzerland and Germany.

The Office also hosted its Annual Military Ombud Symposium on 21 November 2024 and Employee Recognition Awards, and observed Women's and Heritage Month with staff events. Furthermore, it participated in an African Ombudsman and Mediators Association webinar focused on promoting children's rights, underscoring its commitment to advocacy and collaborative governance.

CHALLENGES

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Office faced several persistent challenges that impacted service delivery and operational efficiency.

The Office remains committed to ensuring the successful execution of its legislative mandate. The most prominent challenge the Office is experiencing is its quest for Institutional Independence. The Act does not address the scope of the Military Ombud function, which influences the accountability framework, resolution enforcement and powers, and therefore the credibility of the Military Ombud to deliver on the mandate is compromised due to a lack of understanding and trust by all stakeholders.

The Office will continue to follow the legislative amendment/review process to ensure alignment of the Act with the appropriate organisational form identified. Furthermore, the Office will conduct future outreach events, including radio interviews, to promote the Office's image, clarify its mandate, and engage with stakeholders to ensure that the Office is perceived as independent in finalising complaints.

The expeditious resolution of complaints remained a significant concern due to the complexity of cases, limited cooperation and document provision from the SANDF, and poor adherence to the Complaints Handling Manual timeframes. Despite engagement with SANDF leadership and participation in the Liaison Forum, these issues continued to cause delays.

The inactive state of the Military Ombud website also posed a significant obstacle to effective communication with stakeholders.

In the Legal Support environment, uncertainty surrounding the Military Ombud legislative programme, limited support from the State Attorney, and capacity constraints due to staffing uncertainties and increasing NPM activities hindered progress.

Corporate Support faced bottlenecks caused by slow procurement processes, insufficient personnel capacity, outdated job descriptions, long turnaround times for staffing and security clearances, and unreliable service providers. Additionally, delays in printing Receipt



Vouchers by the DOD Head Quarters Procurement Unit resulted in unjust salary deductions for personnel. These unresolved challenges threaten the Office's ability to meet its outcomes and deliver on its mandate effectively.

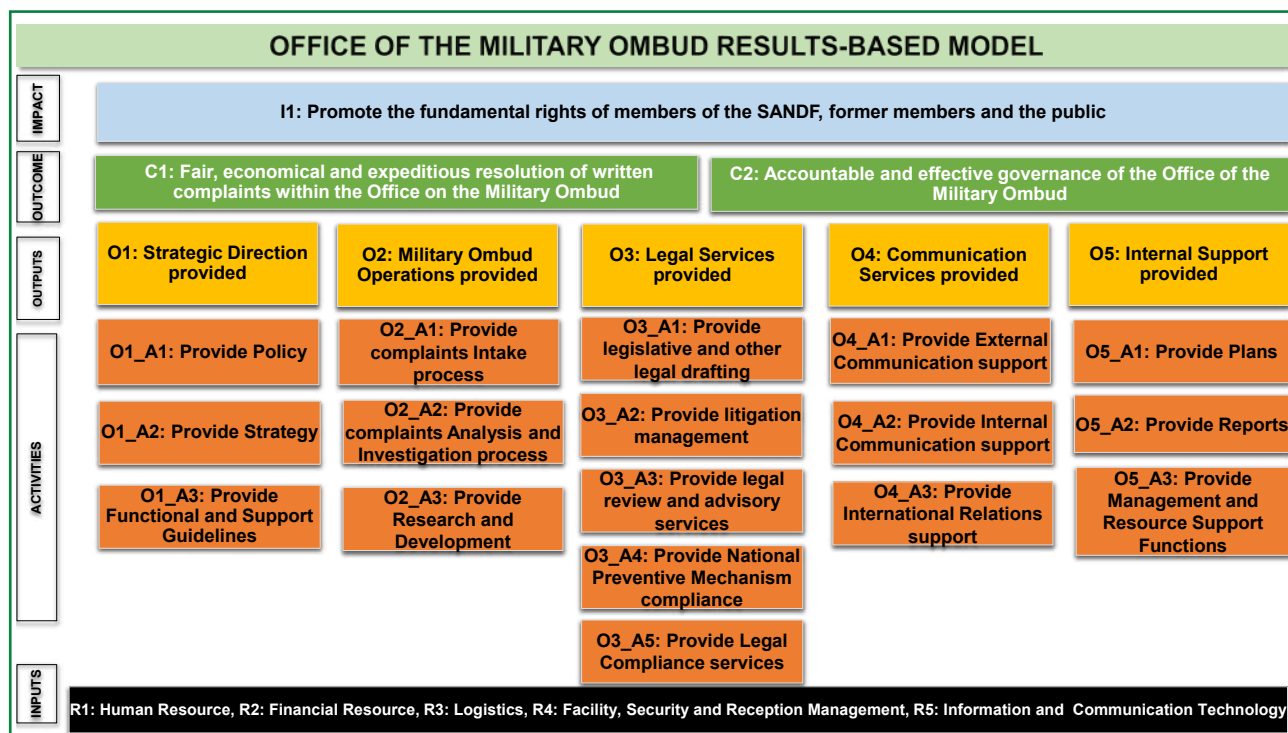
The shortfall in the Compensation of Employees (COE) Budget will remain challenging. Since the Office was created as a line item, numerous requests were submitted to the DOD explaining that the allocation did not fulfil the required number of staffed posts. The Military Ombud will continue to address this matter with the Executive Authority.

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD RESULTS-BASED MODEL

The Office institutionalised the Results-Based Model (RBM) Management Framework as prescribed in the Revised Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans with effect from FY2020/21 as a tool to ensure that the Office fulfils its mandate as expressed in terms of the intended impact, outcomes and outputs. Figure 2 below depicts the Office RBM.

Figure 2. Office of Military Ombud Results-Based Model





OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD IMPACT STATEMENT

Impact Statement

Promote fundamental rights of members of the SANDF, former members and the public (**RBM prefix I1**).

The **Office of the Military Ombud Impact Statement** is derived from the mandate of the which states that *“the Office is to investigate complaints lodged in writing by a member regarding his or her conditions of service; a former member regarding his or her conditions of service; a member of the public regarding the official conduct of a member of the Defence Force; or a person acting on behalf of a member”*. Therefore, the Office Impact Statement seeks to ensure the fundamental rights of the members of the SANDF, former members, and the public, as well as to ensure that complainants are treated fairly, without fear, favour, or prejudice.

OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD OUTCOMES

The **Office of the Military Ombud Outcomes** are defined as *“that which we wish to achieve”* and are the medium-term results for specific stakeholders that result from achieving particular outcomes. The Office Outcomes are directly related to and aligned with the legislative mandate of the Office as provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Measuring the Office of the Military Ombud Outcomes

RBM Prefix	Office of the Military Ombud Outcome	Office of the Military Ombud Outcome Indicators	Baseline (Based on the previous MTSF period)	Five-Year Target (2025)
Foundational MTSF Pillar 2: <i>“Capable South Africans”</i> , 2019-2024 Revised MTSF Apex Priority 6: <i>“Social Cohesion and Safer Communities”</i> Foundational MTSF Pillar 3: <i>“Capable Developmental State”</i> , 2019-2024 Revised MTSF Apex Priority 7: <i>“A Better Africa and World”</i>				
C1	Office of the Military Ombud Outcome 1: Fair, economical and expeditious resolution of written complaints within the Office of the Military Ombud	Percentage of written complaints resolved fairly, economically and expeditiously within the Office of the Military Ombud	75%	75%
Foundational MTSF Pillar 3: <i>“Capable Developmental State”</i> , 2019-2024 Revised MTSF Apex Priority 1: <i>“A Capable, Ethical and Developmental State”</i>				
C2	Office of the Military Ombud Outcome 2: Accountable and effective governance of the Office of the Military Ombud	Percentage of Military Ombud accountability documents submitted in accordance with National prescripts	100%	100%

- **Fair, economical and expeditious resolution of written complaints within the Office of the Military Ombud**

This outcome encompasses the purpose of the Office and includes the following main elements:

- That 75 % of all simple written complaints submitted are investigated and resolved
- That 70% of all complex matters are investigated and resolved; and
- That 75% of all carried-over matters are investigated and resolved.



- **Accountable and effective governance of the Office of the Military Ombud**

The Outcome is related to appropriate organisational form and structure, effective, efficient, and economic resource administration (HR, Fin, Log and ICT), and the establishment of internal administrative policies, systems, controls, and assurance to direct, manage, monitor, control, and report on the resources allocated to the Office.

OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD OUTPUTS

The **Office of the Military Ombud Outputs** are defined as “*what the Office produces or delivers*” and include the final products, goods, and services produced for delivery. The outputs in Table 2 below support the Office’s outcomes and describe its actions to achieve them.

Table 2. Office of the Military Ombud Outputs

Office of the Military Ombud Output and RBM Prefix	Office of the Military Ombud Output Short Description
Office of the Military Ombud Output 1 (O1): Strategic Direction provided	<p>The Office of the Military Ombud Output 1 “Strategic Direction provided” includes policies, strategies and plans, internal assurance provision and risk management functions executed within the Office. The purpose of this output includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure the implementation of National and departmental policies and strategies through strategies, plans and standard operating procedures and the implementation of these strategies, plans and standard operating procedures.• To ensure appropriate organisational form and structure, effective, efficient and economic resource administration and support services (HR, Fin, Log and ICT); including the establishment of internal administrative policies, systems, controls and assurance to direct, manage, monitor, control and report on the resources allocated to the Office.• To ensure departmental compliance with the Regulatory Framework, statutory requirements, and the implementation of internal and external assurance provider recommendations to ensure the effective administration of the Office.
Office of the Military Ombud Output 2 (O2): Military Ombud Operations provided	<p>The Office of the Military Ombud Output 2 “Military Ombud Operations provided” ensures fair, economic and expeditious resolution of complaints within the Office of the Military Ombud within set timeframes. This output measures the resolution rate of written complaints submitted and finalised, including the Intake and Analysis of complaints, the Investigation of complaints and Research and Development.</p>
Office of the Military Ombud Output 3 (O3): Legal Services provided	<p>The Office of the Military Ombud Output 3 “Legal Services provided” provide timely, effective and efficient legal support and services to the Office to enable it to deliver on its mandate within the regulatory framework. This includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide legislative and other legal drafting services to the Office.• Provide legal review and legal advisory services to the Office.• Efficient litigation management to ensure protection of the legal interests of the Office.• NPM inspections and reports.



Office of the Military Ombud Output and RBM Prefix	Office of the Military Ombud Output Short Description
Office of the Military Ombud Output 4 (O4): Communication Services provided	The Office of the Military Ombud Output 4 <i>“Communication Services provided”</i> aims to ensure that the Office receives effective, efficient, and economical external and internal communication and international relations services. This includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Communication management. • Internal Communication management. • International Relations management.
Office of the Military Ombud Output 5 (O5): Internal Support provided	The purpose of the Office of the Military Ombud Output 5 <i>“Internal Support provided”</i> relates to the day-to-day organisational administration support to the Military Ombud to ensure the effective, efficient and economic resource administration and support services (HR, Fin, Log and ICT) and systems, controls and assurance to direct, manage, monitor, control and report on the resources allocated to the Office.

REVISED 2019-2024 MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Office remains committed to implementing and achieving the Revised 2019-2024 MTSF Apex Priorities of the Government. During the year under review, the Office directly and indirectly supported the following MTSF Apex Priorities:

- **MTSF Apex Priority 1: “A Capable, Ethical and Developmental State”.** During the period under review, the Office implemented national and departmental policies and strategies, ensuring an appropriate organisational form and structure, as well as effective, efficient, and economical resource administration and support services.
- **MTSF Apex Priority 3: “Education, Skills and Health”.** During the period under review, the Office provided opportunities for Internships in partnership with the DOD and SASSETA to support national skills development. Members of the Office were permitted to study and attend skills training courses to enhance their knowledge, thereby ensuring effective and efficient service delivery.
- **MTSF Apex Priority 6: “Social Cohesion and Safer Communities”.** Regarding Priority 6, the Office continued with extensive Outreach Programmes to educate and raise awareness among SANDF members and former members and the Public about the office’s legislative mandate.
- **MTSF Apex Priority 7: “A Better Africa and World”.** One of the Office’s unique strengths is its capacity to manage knowledge and lessons learned and participate in international engagements. The Office is an active participant and member of the DCAF, the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association (AOMA), and the International Ombudsman Institute (IOI), and has continued to strengthen relations between the Office and its stakeholders.

INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

THE MILITARY OMBUD OUTPUT INDICATORS FOR FY2024/25

Table 3. Office of the Military Ombud Outcomes, Outputs, Output Indicators, Targets and Actual Achievement over the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

Performance Indicator	Annual Target as per APP	Quarter 1 Progress		Quarter 2 Progress		Quarter 3 Progress		Quarter 4 Progress		Overall Achievement
		Quarter 1 Target as per APP	Quarter 1 Output achieved	Quarter 2 Target as per APP	Quarter 2 Output - achieved	Quarter 3 Target as per APP	Quarter 3 Output achieved	Quarter 4 Output as per APP	Quarter 4 Output achieved	
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
Outcome 1: Fairly, economical and expeditious resolution of complaints within the Office of the Military Ombud										
Output 2: Military Operations provided										
Percentage of written complaints resolved fairly, economically and expeditiously within the Office of the Military Ombud	75%	18.75%	11.08%	37.50%	82.37%	56.25%	83.02%	75%	89.58%	89.58%
Output 4: Communication Services provided										
Percentage compliance with Communication Plan	100%	100%	90.11%	100%	80.61%	100%	77.37%	100%	52.22%	75.08%
Outcome 2: Accountable and Effective Governance of the Office of the Military Ombud										
Output 1: Strategic Direction Provided										
Percentage adherence to the DOD Master Record Index for Policies (Implementation of DOD Policies)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage adherence to the DOD Master Record Index for Strategies (Implementation of DOD Strategies)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage adherence to the DOD Master Record Index for Functional and Support Guidelines for Planning, Budgeting, Reporting and Risk Management (Office of the Military Ombud approved Functional and Support Guidelines)	100%	-	-	100%	50%	-	50%	-	-	100%
Percentage adherence to the Military Ombud Master Record Index for Plans (Status Report on the Military Ombud MRI for Plans)	100%	8.3%	8.3%	-	-	-	-	91.7%	91.7%	100%





Performance Indicator	Annual Target as per APP	Quarter 1 Progress		Quarter 2 Progress		Quarter 3 Progress		Quarter 4 Progress		Overall Achievement
		Quarter 1 Target as per APP	Quarter 1 Output achieved	Quarter 2 Target as per APP	Quarter 2 Output - achieved	Quarter 3 Target as per APP	Quarter 3 Output achieved	Quarter 4 Output as per APP	Quarter 4 Output achieved	
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k
Percentage of Military Ombud accountability documents submitted in accordance with National Prescripts (Tabling Office of the Military Ombud AAR)	100%	100%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%
Number of Audit findings within the Office of the Military Ombud	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of fruitless and wasteful expenditure within the Office of the Military Ombud	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of irregular expenditure within the Office of the Military Ombud	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 ²	0	0	1

² During the review period, an irregular expenditure was reported. An office employee arranged for a supplier to deliver goods without adhering to the required procurement processes. An investigation is currently underway, and measures have been implemented to prevent such occurrences in the future. The Military Ombud has instructed that office employees are prohibited from interacting with suppliers or service providers; all interactions must be conducted solely by the logistics personnel.

PART



C



OPERATIONS



COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

The purpose of Operations, in terms of Section 3 of the Act, is to investigate and ensure that complaints are resolved fairly, economically and expeditiously. During the reporting period, this was achieved through the intake and analysis of complaints, the investigation of complaints, and the provision of recommendations for finalisation.

This part of the report details the work to pursue the Office's legislative purpose. It highlights some details regarding the complaints received by the Military Ombud and reports on their resolution.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Tables 4, 5 and 6 below provide an overview of the complaints flow within the Office since the FY2024/25.

Table 4. Five-Year Statistical Overview of Cases from the FY2020/21 to the FY2024/25

Ser No	Financial Year	Total number of Carry-Over Cases	Total number of Cases Received during the Financial Year	Total number of Cases for the Financial Year	Total number of Cases finalised during the Financial Year	Total number of Active Cases at the End of the Financial Year
	a	b	c	d	e	f
1	FY2020/21	148	297	445	357	88
2	FY2021/22	88	263	351	293	58
3	FY2022/23	58	350	408	335	73
4	FY2023/24	73	276	349	278	72 ³
5	FY2024/25	72 ⁴	590	662	593	69 ⁵

Table 5. Carry-Over Cases as at 31 March 2024

FY2021/22	FY2022/23	FY2023/2024	Total
a	b	c	d
1	5	66	72

Table 6. Active Cases on 01 April 2025

FY2023/24	FY2024/25	Total
a	b	d
2	67	69

³ At the end of FY2023/24, the office reported 71 carry-over complaints from FY2023/24 to FY2024/25. However, during an audit of the caseload, it was determined that the correct number of active complaints was 72.

⁴ The 72 carry-over complaints from FY2023/24 to FY2024/25 included 1 case from FY2021/22, 5 complaints from FY2022/23 and 66 complaints from FY2023/24.

⁵ The 69 active complaints include two from FY2023/24 and 67 from FY2024/25.

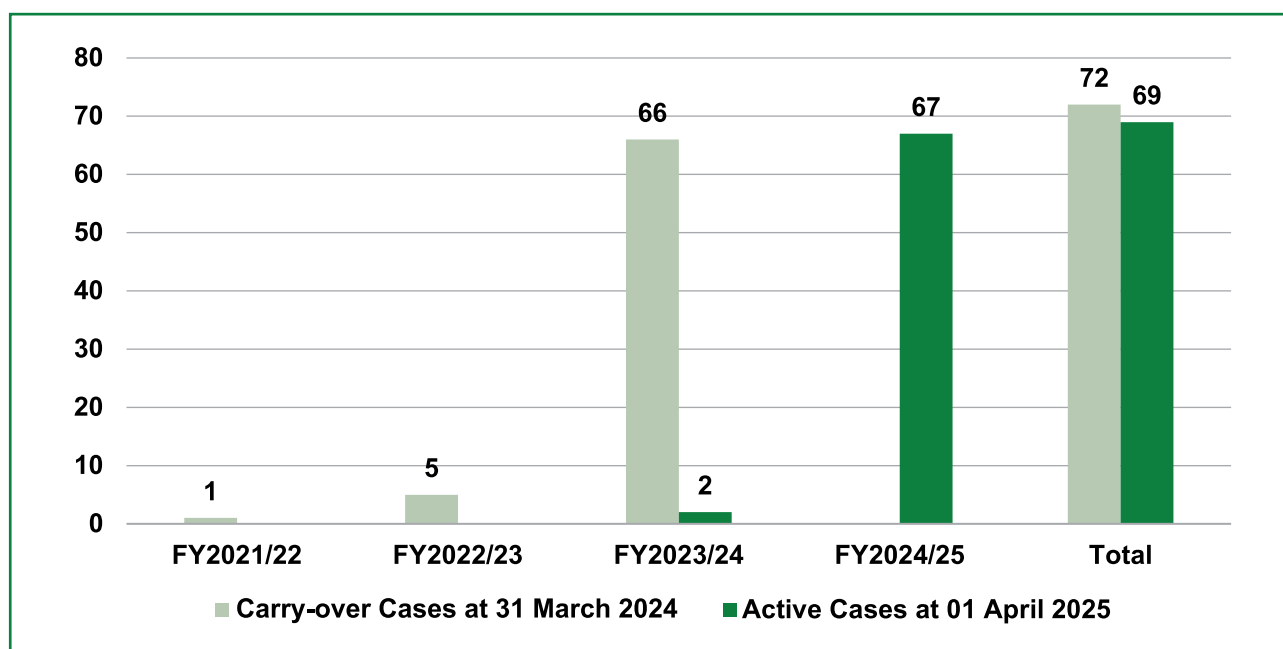


AGE ANALYSIS OF CARRY-OVER COMPLAINTS

Following Section 3 of the Act, the Office aims to resolve complaints fairly, economically, and expeditiously. To support this legislative mandate, improvements in the speed and quality of complaint handling, particularly investigation turnaround times, remained a critical focus area during the year under review.

At the end of the reporting period, total carry-over complaints had reduced to 69, with a significant decrease in historic carry-over complaints compared to the previous financial year, as illustrated in Figure 3 below. The average time to resolve complex complaints for carry-over and in-year complaints was 264 days, and the average time to resolve simple complaints was 38 days. This is well within the time frames of the approved Technical Indicator Description. Of the two historic carry-over complaints, investigations have been concluded, and prioritisation for finalisation is planned for the first quarter of the new financial year.

Figure 3. Age Analysis of Complaints from the FY2021/22 to the FY2024/25

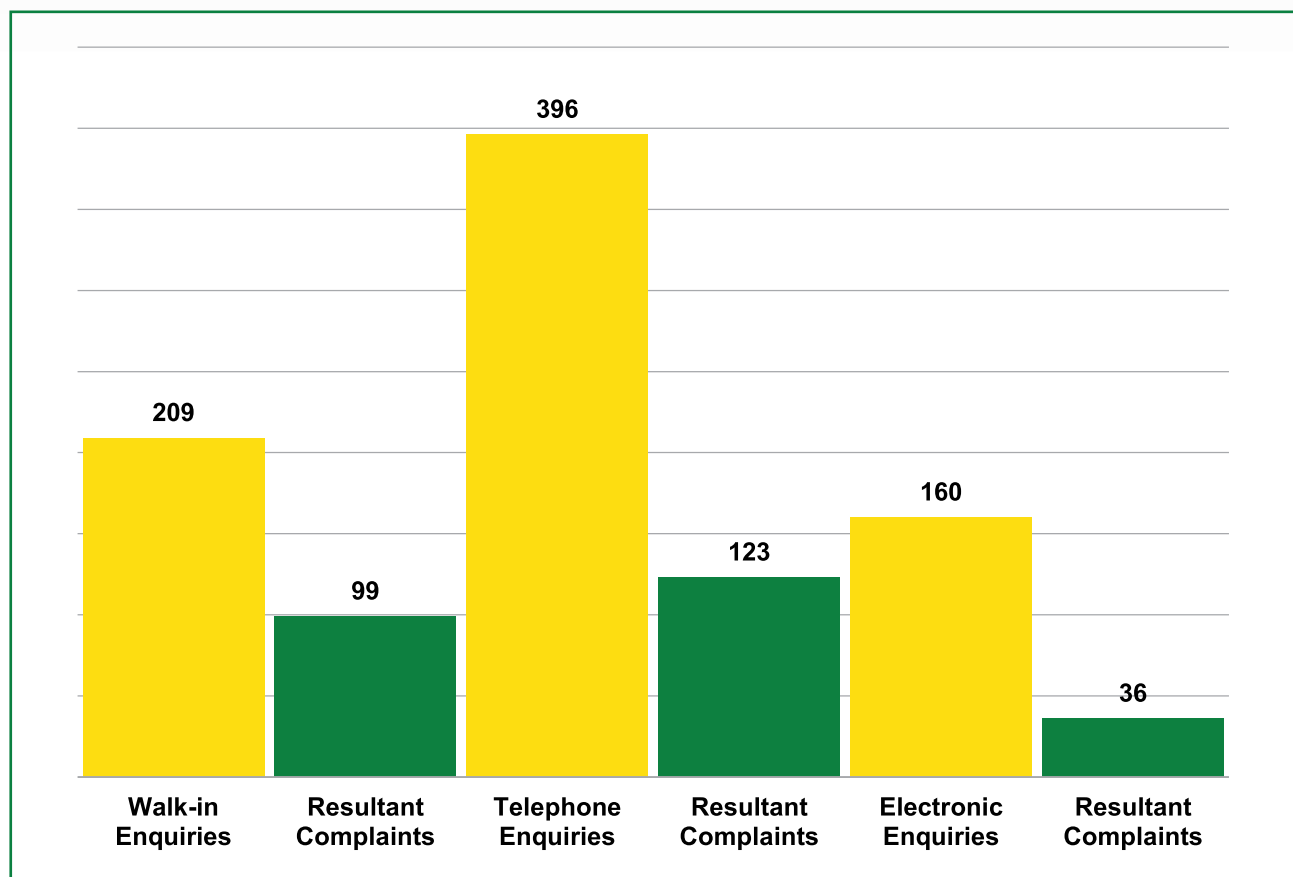




PERFORMANCE AND ANALYSIS OF THE FY2024/25

During the period under review, the Office received a range of contacts from potential complainants in addition to participating in outreach events. These contacts have been categorised as walk-in enquiries, telephone enquiries, and electronic enquiries see Figure 4 below. Electronic enquiries include emails and social media messages that require operational staff responses. Several of these initial contacts progressed to formal complaints lodged with the Office.

Figure 4. Mode of Contacts Logged during the FY2024/25



Section 6(2) of the Act, read together with the Military Ombud Complaints Regulations of 2015, requires that complaints be made in writing using the prescribed Complaint Form. However, the Office has made various modes of contact available, in addition to the traditional methods of posting and faxing complaints, to promote accessibility.

The Office managed a caseload of **662** complaints, comprising **590** new complaints received during the financial year and **72** carried over from the previous year. **593** complaints were resolved, representing a resolution rate of **89.58%**.

This **89.58%** resolution rate is a key highlight of the Office's performance in the financial year. It exceeded the annual performance target of a **75%** resolution rate by **14.58%**. The Office recorded an increase in the intake of new complaints compared to previous financial years.



Notably, 237 complaints were received from former civilian employees of the SANDF who had served at Air Force Base (AFB) Hoedspruit. Following Section 4 of the Act, these individuals are classified as members of the public. Their complaint⁶ referenced specific conduct by members of the SANDF. Upon assessment, it was found that the DOD had previously addressed the matter; however, it remained unclear whether it had reached finality through litigation in the mid-1990s. Ultimately, the decision was made to refer the complainants to the Secretary for Defence⁷ for further handling.

While it is not uncommon for the Military Ombud to receive complaints from individuals who are not members of the SANDF, the volume of complaints relating to a single incident should be regarded as exceptional and may be classified as outlier data.

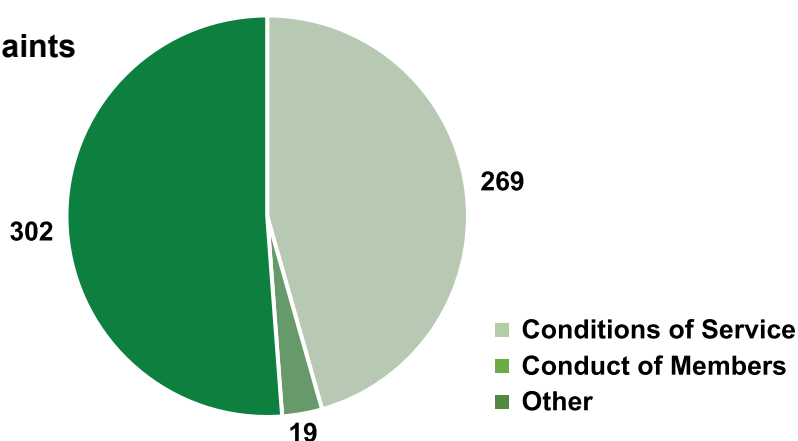
Normalising⁸ the Office's performance for FY2024/25 is essential for understanding complaint resolution trends related to the SANDF. Over the past five years, the average number of complaints received annually has been **353**. Based on this, the normalised resolution performance for the Office in FY2024/25 can be estimated at **83.84%**.

NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

Over the reporting period, the Office received 590 new complaints, of which 269 were submitted by members of the SANDF, raising concerns about their conditions of service — an increase from the 245 received in the previous financial year.

Interestingly, despite the internal deployment of the SANDF under Operation PROSPER following the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the number of complaints from members of the public about the official conduct of SANDF personnel remained relatively low. This pattern has continued for years, suggesting a sustained decline in public-facing grievances after that period, as depicted in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Nature of Complaints



⁶ For the purpose of the mandate of the Ombud, matters relating to the employment of workers not defined as members of the Defence Force are best dealt with under the provisions of the Labour Relations Act, 1995. See: *Chirwa v Transnet Limited and Others* (CCT 78/06) [2007] ZACC 23; 2008 (4) SA 367 (CC); 2008.

⁷ Normally, such complainants are advised to approach the Public Service Commission or the relevant Sectoral Bargaining Council with their complaints, depending on their substance.

⁸ Reducing the 237 complaints from employees in Mpumalanga by 99% normalises new complaints received for the year to 355, resulting in a caseload of 427 for FY2024/25. Normalising the complaints resolved for FY 24/25 from 593 to 358 would then regularise complaints resolution performance for the year to 83.84%.



CATEGORY AND SCOPE COMPLAINTS

As part of its mandate, the Office receives and assesses a wide range of complaints, many of which fall squarely within its investigative jurisdiction. However, not all matters submitted meet the legislative criteria for investigation.

A notable category in this regard is “*Other Complaints*.” These are cases that fall outside the Office's statutory mandate and, therefore, cannot be formally pursued. This category includes, for example, the 237 complaints lodged by former SANDF employees, concerns related to military veterans' benefits, and cases involving domestic disputes or intimidation where no official SANDF duty or conduct is implicated.

To clarify the Ombud's remit, Section 4 of the Act assigns the duty to investigate complaints from current and former SANDF members concerning their service conditions. These conditions are comprehensively defined in the Defence Amendment Act, Act No. 22 of 2010, which outlines nearly 30 distinct service-related aspects.

For clarity and analysis, these conditions of service are broadly grouped into the following categories:

- Placement and utilisation
- Remuneration
- Termination of service
- Education, training, and development
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Promotion and demotion
- Service benefits
- Working environment

Table 7 below shows the categories of complaints received during the reporting period. It offers insight into the range and frequency of issues brought before the Office and highlights areas of concern as experienced by members and former members of the SANDF.

**Table 7. Category of New Complaints Received in the FY2024/25**

Ser No	Category of Complaints	New Complaints Received in FY2024/25	Active Cases for FY2024/25
	a	b	c
1	Official Conduct of a member of the SANDF	19	5
2	Other	302	7
3	Appointment and Appointment Procedure	29	4
4	Placement or Utilisation	19	2
5	Remuneration	50	10
6	Service Termination	51	11
7	Education, Training and Development	4	2
8	Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures	9	1
9	Promotion and Demotion	23	10
10	Service Benefits	72	14
11	Working Environment	12	1
Total		590	67⁹

PROFILE OF COMPLAINANTS

Building on the analysis provided earlier, particularly the explanation of the outlier data concerning public complaints, it is worth noting that the distribution of complaints for the 2024/25 financial year presents a notable deviation from previous trends. Specifically, there is an even 50/50 split between complaints related to conditions of service and those falling into other categories—an anomaly attributable primarily to the unusually high number of complaints received from members of the public.

A closer look at the profile of complainants reveals that current members of the SANDF submitted the majority of complaints relating to conditions of service. A total of 154 complaints from serving members were received, accounting for approximately 26% of all new complaints lodged during the period under review. Former SANDF members represent the second largest group of complainants, with 142 cases, roughly 24%.

Most significantly, the Office received 294 complaints from members of the public. This figure represents 50% of the total 590 complaints submitted in the 2024/25 financial year, as illustrated in Figure 6 below¹⁰.

⁹ Excluding the 2 Carry-Over complaints from FY2023/24.

¹⁰ Some complaints categorised as members from the Public are not complaining about the official conduct of members. These complaints include civilian employees of the DOD, DMV benefits for persons that did not integrate in the SANDF, private disputes with soldiers, etc.



Figure 6. Complaints submitted as per the Mandate of the Office

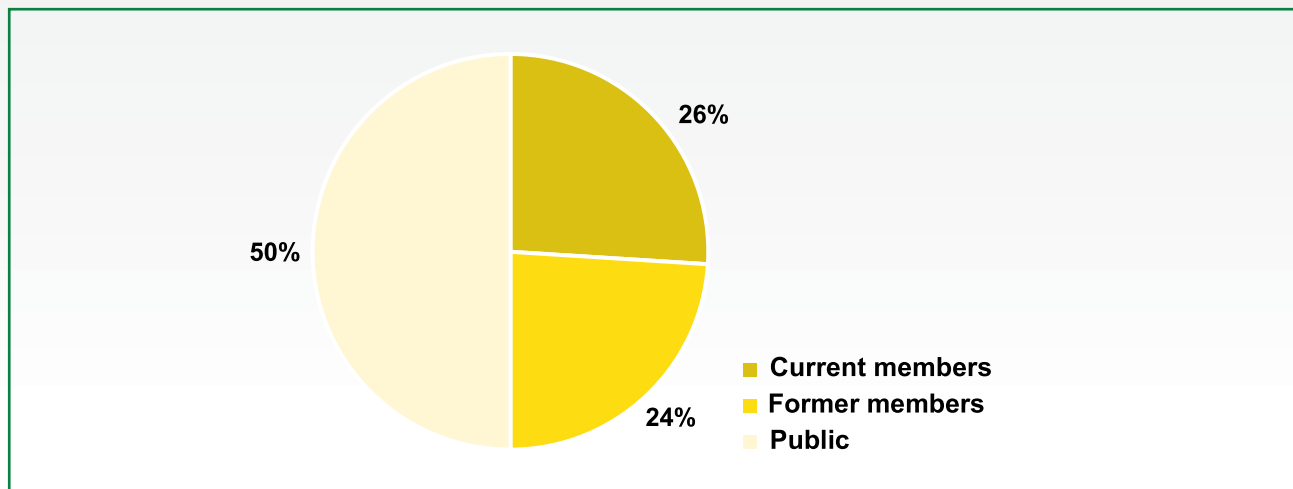
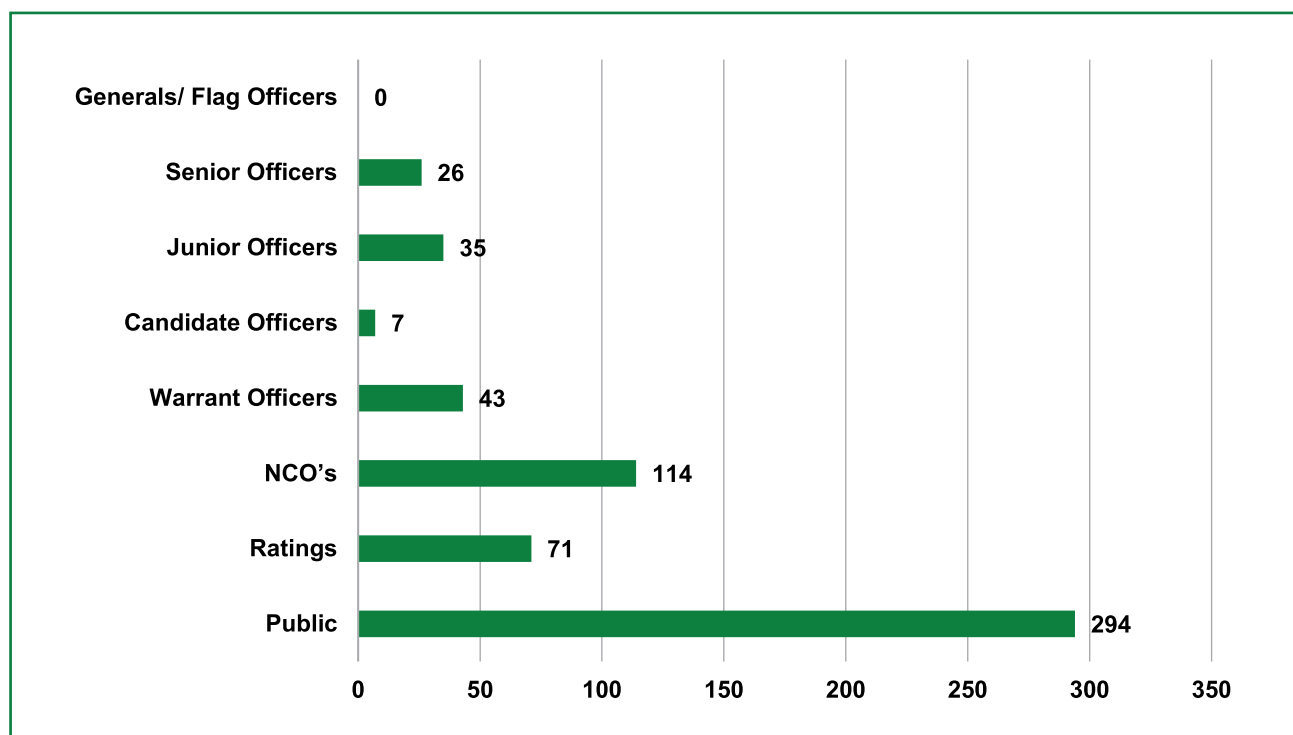


Figure 7. Rank Level of Complainants



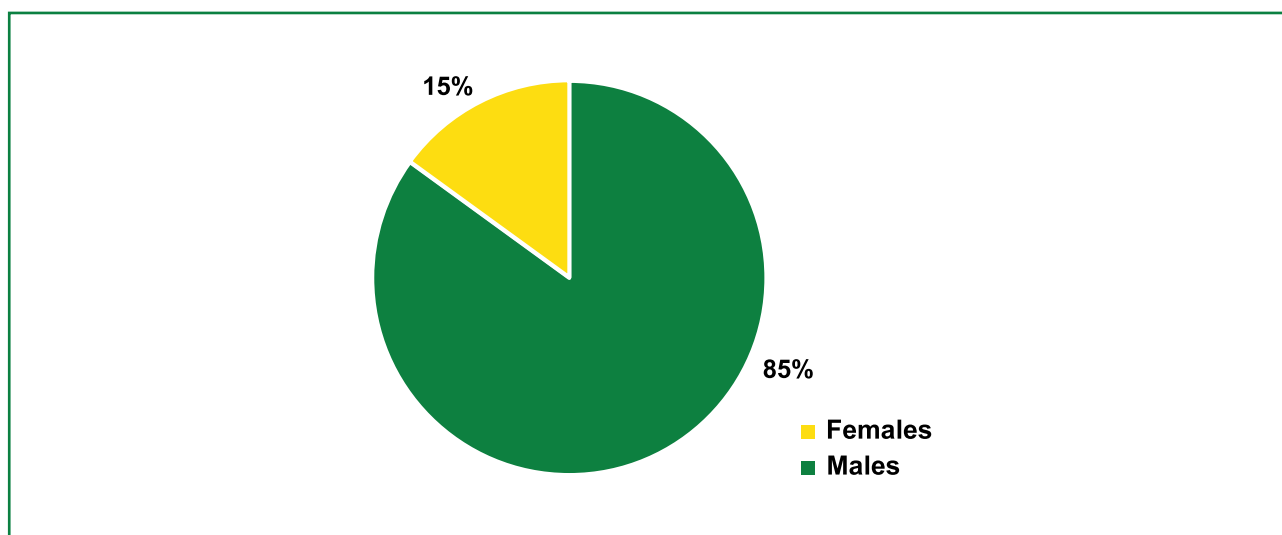
Continuing the analysis of the profile of complainants, it is significant to note the distribution of complaints by rank level within the SANDF. As illustrated in Figure 9 above, Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) accounted for a substantial proportion of the complaints received from Regular and Reserve Force members. A total of 114 complaints were submitted by NCOs, representing approximately 39% of all complaints from within the uniformed ranks.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF COMPLAINTS

In line with trends observed in previous years, the Office received a significantly higher number of complaints from male complainants as seen in Figure 8 below. Of the 590 complaints lodged during the 2024/25 financial year, 85% were submitted by males, while only 15% were from females. This marks a slight decrease in female representation compared to previous financial years, where women consistently accounted for approximately 20% of complainants.

This gender imbalance is also reflected among serving and former SANDF members, particularly in complaints relating to conditions of service. Female complainants in this category constituted around 16% of submissions, notably lower than the SANDF's gender composition, where women make up just under 30% of the overall force. The disparity suggests a potential underrepresentation of women in the complaint processes or broader systemic factors that may warrant further examination.

Figure 8. Gender Distribution of Complaints



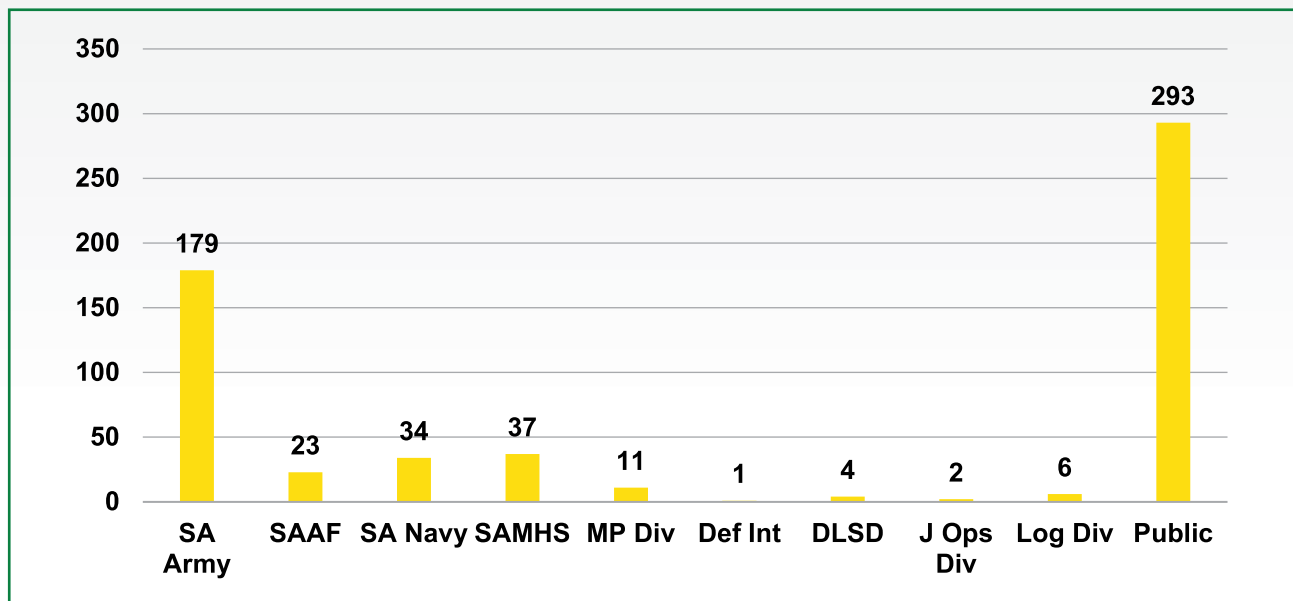
ORIGIN OF COMPLAINTS

When analysing the source of complaints by Service or Division, the South African Army (SA Army) once again accounted for the highest number of submissions. A total of 179 complaints were received from current and former members of the SA Army, representing approximately 60% of all complaints lodged by uniformed personnel during the period under review.

This figure is consistent with the size of the SA Army, which remains the most significant component of the SANDF in terms of personnel. Its larger footprint naturally contributes to a higher volume of complaints. The distribution of complaints received from the various Services, Divisions, and members of the public is illustrated in Figure 9 below.



Figure 9. Complaints per Service, Division and the Public for the FY2024/25



GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

In examining the geographical spread of complaints, Figure 10, Mpumalanga recorded the highest number of submissions during the 2024/25 financial year. This anomaly is primarily attributed to a large group of 237 complaints received from members of the public residing in the province, who were employed as civilian staff at AFB Hoedspruit during the 1990s. As previously explained, these complaints do not reflect on the current or recent administration of the SANDF, but rather relate to historical grievances, which the Office duly addressed.

Figure 10. Geographical Distribution of Complaints

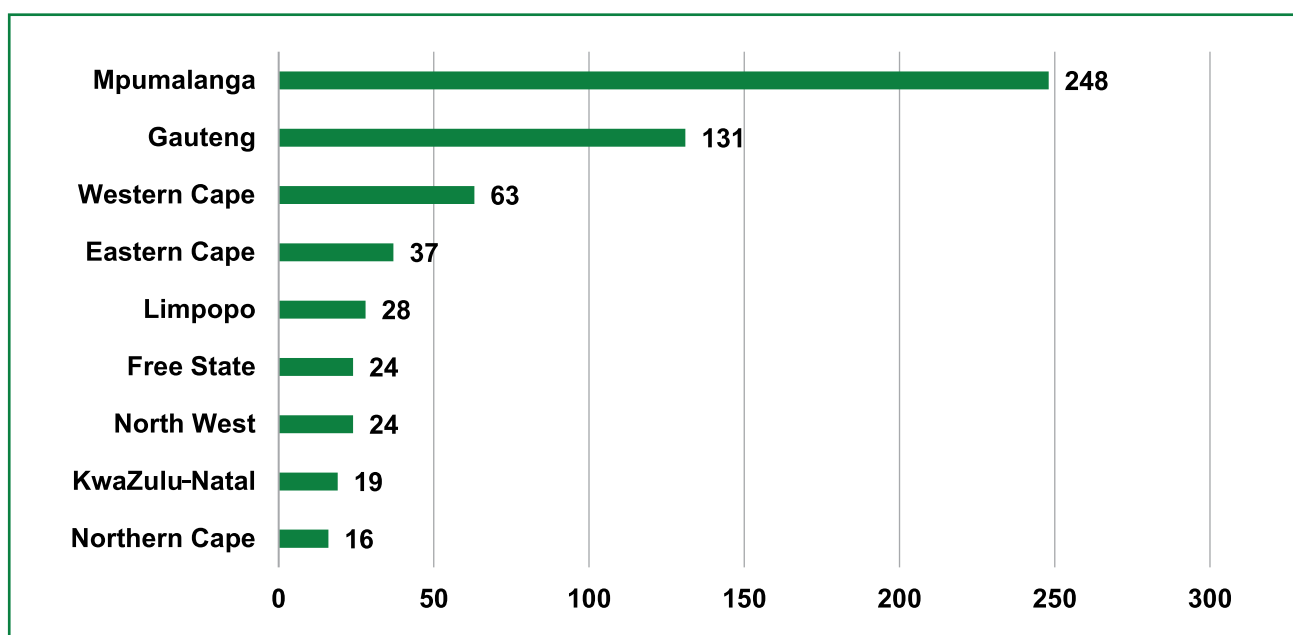
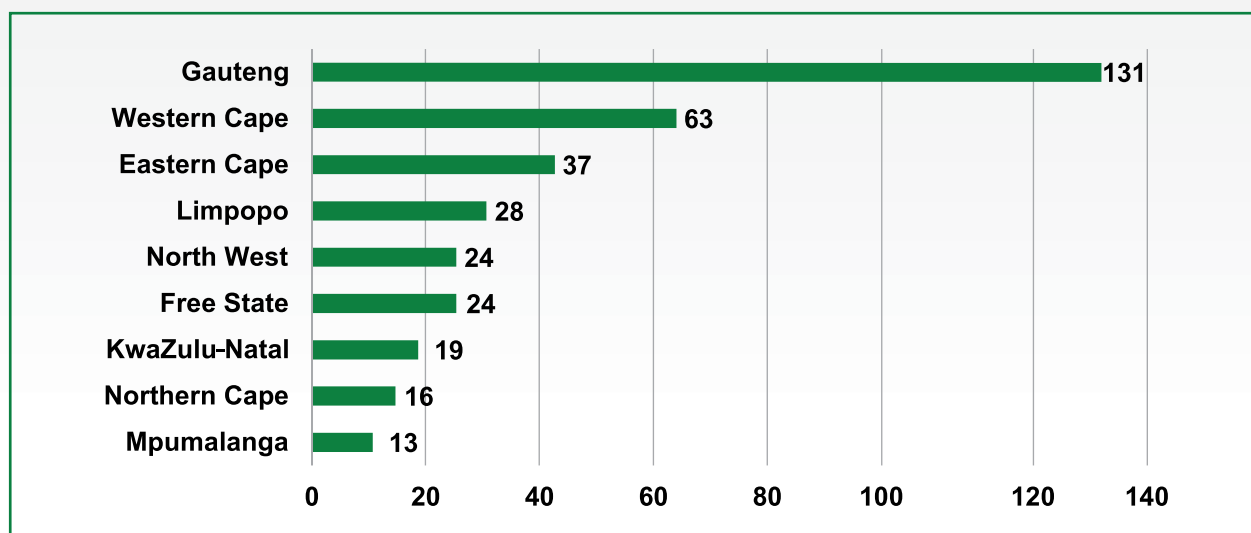


Figure 11. Regularised¹¹ Geographical Distribution of Complaints



A regularised dataset, excluding the aforementioned cluster of historical complaints, was developed to reflect current trends and provide a more representative picture. Within this adjusted dataset, Gauteng emerges as the province with the highest complaints, accounting for approximately 37% of the total. The Western Cape follows it at around 18% and the Eastern Cape at 10%. The remaining complaints are distributed across the other provinces, as illustrated in Figure 11 above.

MANNER OF RESOLUTION OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING THE FY2024/25

Building on the overall caseload analysis, this section provides insight into how the Office resolved complaints during the reporting period. Tables 8 and 9 below outline the resolution of 593 complaints, comprising 70 matters from FY2023/24 and 523 matters finalised during FY2024/25. These resolved cases represent most of the total caseload of 662 complaints managed by the Office during the financial year under review.

The data reflects a continued positive trajectory in the Office's complaint resolution performance. The increasing number of resolved matters, particularly through structured processes such as referrals and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, demonstrates the Office's commitment to efficient and fair complaint handling. This upward trend will be further pursued and strengthened during FY2025/26 to improve service delivery and stakeholder confidence.

¹¹ See previous explanation of the normalised data excluding the 237 complaints from Mpumalanga.

**Table 8. Manner of Resolution of Complaints Received for the FY2024/25**

Ser No	Manner of Resolution of Complaints Received	Number of Resolutions
1	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 4(1) – Not a condition of service/official conduct	25
2	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 6(2) – Not in prescribed format	
3	Complaint Resolved in terms of Section 6(6)(b) – Resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution	21
4	Complaint Upheld in terms of Section 6(7)(a) – Upheld on merit	9
5	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 6(7)(a) – Dismissed on merit	19
6	Complaint Referred in terms of Section 6(7)(c) – Appropriate Public Institution	320
7	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 7(1) – Matter before Court	4
8	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 7(2)(a) – May Undermine channels of Command	2
9	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 7(2)(c) – Late referral not condoned	12
10	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 7(2)(d) – Failed to exhaust SANDF Individual Grievance Regulations, 2016	94
11	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 7(2)(e) – Referred to other Dispute Mechanism	3
12	Complaint Dismissed - Lack of cooperation from Complainant	6
13	Complaint Withdrawn	4
14	Duplicate	4
Total number of Resolutions for FY2024/25		523

The data in Table 8 provides a detailed breakdown of the various outcomes recorded for complaints received and resolved during the 2024/25 financial year. The different resolution categories reflect the legal framework underpinning the Office mandate and operations, as set out in the Act and its associated prescripts.

The most common resolution method involved referring complaints to appropriate public institutions under Section 6(7)(c) of the Act. A total of 320 complaints—comprising over 61% of the resolved caseload and including the 237 historical complaints from Mpumalanga discussed earlier—were found to fall outside the Office's jurisdiction and were, therefore, referred to institutions better positioned to address the issues raised.

Complaints not meeting procedural or statutory requirements were recorded under several dismissal or declined categories. Notably, 94 complaints were declined in terms of Section 7(2)(d) due to the complainants' failure to exhaust internal grievance procedures, as required by the SANDF Individual Grievance Regulations of 2016. A further 25 complaints were dismissed under Section 4(1), because the subject matter did not relate to a condition of service or official conduct.

Encouragingly, 21 complaints were resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms, in Section 6(6)(b), highlighting the Office's ongoing efforts to promote collaborative and non-adversarial dispute resolution methods. In addition, nine complaints were upheld on their merits under Section 6(7)(a), leading to appropriate remedial recommendations to the MOD&MV.



More minor complaints were dismissed on other grounds, including lack of cooperation from complainants, duplication, sub judice matters, or late referrals. The complainants voluntarily withdrew four complaints.

In total, 523 complaints were resolved during the 2024/25 financial year, within the year of receipt, reflecting the Office's sustained commitment to its mandate and a continued upward trend in resolution capacity. The effectiveness and integrity of these processes contribute meaningfully to institutional accountability and, as required by Section 6(6)(c) of the Act, to promote the fundamental rights of current and former members of the SANDF and public members.

Table 9. Manner of Resolution of Complaints Carried over from FY2023/24

Ser No	Manner of Resolution of Complaints Carried Over	Number of Resolutions
1	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 4(1) – Not a condition of service/official conduct	2
3	Complaint Resolved in terms of Section 6(6)(b) – Resolved through Alternative Dispute Resolution	9
4	Complaint Upheld in terms of Section 6(7)(a) – Upheld on merit	32
5	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 6(7)(a) – Dismissed on merit	15
6	Complaint Resolved in terms of Section 6(7)(b) - Recommended alternative resolution	2
7	Complaint Referred in terms of Section 6(7)(c) – Appropriate Public Institution	3
9	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 7(2)(c) – Late referral not condoned	3
10	Complaint Dismissed in terms of Section 7(2)(d) – Failed to exhaust SANDF Individual Grievance Regulations, 2016	1
12	Complaint Dismissed - Lack of cooperation from Complainant	2
15	Complaint Withdrawn	1
Total number Carried Over for FY2024/25		70

CONCLUSION

The 2024/25 reporting period marked a significant chapter in the Office operational journey. In alignment with its legislative mandate, the Office demonstrated marked improvements in resolution rates and turnaround times and navigated an exceptionally high and diverse caseload with fairness, efficiency, and integrity.

The influx of complaints, particularly the anomalous volume received from members of the public, presented unique challenges, yet also underscored the importance of accessibility and responsiveness in public service delivery. Through the continued use of structured resolution mechanisms, including referrals and alternative dispute resolution, the Office remained steadfast in its commitment to resolving complaints to uphold individuals' rights and strengthen institutional accountability.

As the Office moves forward into the 2025/26 financial year, the insights gained and momentum established during this period will serve as a strong foundation for further advancing the Office's mission of ensuring just administrative conduct within the defence environment.



LEGAL SUPPORT

PURPOSE

The Directorate Legal Support (DLS) provides effective and efficient legal services and support to the Office.

OVERVIEW

The outputs for DLS align with and support the Office's mandate, as reflected in the Office's APP for the 2024/25 MTEF. DLS's primary roles are to provide legal drafting, litigation management, review, and advisory services, represent the Office in the NPM, and provide legal compliance services.

During the reporting period, DLS successfully provided legal advice in the form of legal opinions, which were drafted as and when required, to protect the interests of the Office. The Directorate also executed its function of reviewing investigation reports in compliance with the Complaints Handling Manual and exceeded its set target for the reporting period. DLS successfully represented the Office in the NPM. The Directorate could not provide legal compliance services for the reporting period. However, measures are being implemented to capacitate DLS to execute this critical function. While drafting the Amendment Bill, which continued to be placed in abeyance, alternatives were considered to achieve progress with the MOD&MV's authority to amend the Military Ombud Act, Act No. 4 of 2012.

NATIONAL PREVENTIVE MECHANISM

The NPM operates as a multi-body entity under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The Cabinet designated the Office, the Judicial Inspectorate of Correctional Services, the Health Ombud, and the Independent Police Investigative Directorate as part of a multi-body NPM. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) provides the coordination function of the NPM.

During the reporting period, the NPM visited various Military Detention Barracks (Bloemfontein and Wynberg), Correctional Services facilities, South African Police Service holding cells, Psychiatric wards, and places of safety. A delegation from the SAHRC, including the Chairperson, also participated in the visits. The relevant reports were drafted.

The Sub-committee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT) visited South Africa from February to March 2024, and the visit culminated in a report. The report, amongst others, raised concerns about the South African NPM's composition and legal basis. Consequently, the SPT removed the Republic of South Africa from the list of state parties with designated NPMs. To address concerns raised by the SPT, the Government has been engaging in bilateral and multilateral discussions. As such, on 04 December 2024, the Cabinet resolved to redesignate the SAHRC as the sole NPM. The impact of this redesignation is that the Office is not duly authorised to further partake in the NPM activities for the FY2025/26.



LITIGATION

Litigation managed for the period under review continued to range from applications instituted by complainants in the High Court, either seeking orders against the MOD&MV for the implementation of the Military Ombud's findings and recommendations and applications to review and set aside the Military Ombud's findings and recommendations. Court judgements in specific applications were notable for amending the Act and protecting the interests of the Office.

STATUS OF MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING/MEMORANDA OF AGREEMENT/SERVICE DELIVERY AGREEMENTS

Key stakeholder relations that impacted the core business of the Office were managed through Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) and Service Level Agreements (SLA). While these documents are continuously reviewed for effectiveness and efficiency, new agreements were entered into or identified to ensure significant stakeholder relationships are formalised and sustained. These agreements have proved fruitful in collaborative efforts during the financial year.

Table 10. Status of Memoranda of Understanding, Memoranda of Agreement and Service Level Agreements

Stakeholder	Status of MOU/MOA/SLA			Comment
	In Process	Signed	To be Reviewed	
a	b	c	d	
DOD (MOU and SLA)	✓			Draft MOU and SLA circulated between the Office and the DOD, and inputs were integrated. Final drafts circulated internally before submission to the DOD.
Defence Force Service Commission (MOU)			✓	A review of amendments was conducted in October 2024. No amendments were required.
Public Protector (MOU)	✓			Both Parties.

LEGAL REVIEW OF INVESTIGATION REPORTS

The legal review of investigative reports enhances the Office's complaints-handling mechanism. In addition, it intends to limit foreseeable legal risks to contain and possibly minimise exorbitant litigation costs to the Office, complainants, and the DOD. During the reporting period, the Directorate was also responsible for reviewing the outcome of jurisdiction assessments in the Office.

PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION MANUAL

Efforts are ongoing to update the Promotion of Access to Information (PAIA) Manual for the Office. In October 2023, the Information Regulator conducted a compliance assessment audit and issued a Compliance Assessment Report to the Military Ombud. The report's recommendations were addressed, and the updating and amendment of the PAIA Manual for the Office is nearing finalisation.



COMMUNICATION

PURPOSE

The Directorate Communication Services is tasked with delivering effective, efficient, and economical communication services. Its core mission is to enhance the visibility, credibility, and strategic communication of the Office, ensuring that both internal and external stakeholders clearly understand its mandate.

OVERVIEW

During the 2024/25 financial year, the Directorate played a pivotal role in promoting awareness of the Military Ombud's services among SANDF members, government entities, and the general public. Through strategic branding, stakeholder engagement, and digital outreach, the Directorate reinforced the Office's commitment to accountability, accessibility, and transparency.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Internal communication was strategically managed to foster staff cohesion, organizational alignment, and a strong institutional culture. Key initiatives included:

- **News Flashes and Newsletters.** Regular updates kept staff informed about institutional developments, national trends, and sector-specific issues.
- **Educational Content.** Communications focused on governance, nation-building, and policy awareness.
- **Event Support.** The Directorate coordinated internal events, including staff recognition ceremonies, national day celebrations, and wellness activities, to promote morale and a sense of belonging among staff.
- **Workforce Engagement.** These efforts contributed to a more connected and motivated workforce, aligned with the Office's values of service, integrity, and professionalism.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

The Directorate significantly expanded the Office's external reach through:

- **Public Engagements.** Participation in national events, such as the Presidential Izimbizo and government exhibitions, allowed for direct interaction with citizens and stakeholders.
- **Media Relations.** The Office maintained a strong presence across traditional and digital media platforms, including radio, newspapers, television, and online articles.
- **Branding and Marketing.** Consistent visual identity and professional branding at events helped build trust and recognition.
- **Government Collaboration.** Partnerships with government departments and ombuds institutions facilitated knowledge sharing and joint public education efforts.
- **Digital Platforms.** Social media was used to share real-time updates, respond to public inquiries, and highlight outreach activities.



OUTREACH PROGRAMME

The 2024/25 Outreach Programme was a cornerstone of the Directorate's strategy, aiming to raise awareness and promote the Office's services through:

- **Provincial Engagements.** Activities were conducted across all provinces, with notable events in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, North West, Mpumalanga, and Western Cape.
- **Community Activations.** Public events in malls, taxi ranks, and community centres ensured broad societal reach.
- **Youth and Human Rights Focus.** Participation in expos and commemorative events emphasised civic education and empowerment.
- **Strategic Alignment.** Outreach efforts were timed with national observances and local opportunities to maximise visibility and relevance.
- **Inclusive Approach.** The programme targeted both military personnel and civilians, ensuring equitable access to information and services.

The 2024/2025 Outreach Programme successfully broadened the Military Ombud's footprint, as shown in Table 11 below. It reaffirmed the Office's dedication to upholding the rights of SANDF members and enhanced public confidence in the Office. Through its well-coordinated, diverse, and people-centred approach, the Military Ombud continued to advance its mission of fairness, justice, and accountability in military affairs.



Table 11. Outreach Programme per Province for FY2024/25

Province	Base/Unit	Planned as per the Outreach Programme				Date Visited
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Free State	Ladybrand Operational Base	1	-	-	-	15 April 2024
	Fouriesburg Operational Base	1	-	-	-	16 April 2024
	DOD Mobilisation Centre, De Brug	1	-	-	-	25 April 2024
	Bloemfontein Show, Public Activation	1	-	-	-	25-30 April 2024
	2 Field Engineer Regiment, Bethlehem	-	-	1	-	28 October 2024
	South African Army Engineer Formation, School of Engineers, Kroonstad	-	-	1	-	29 October 2024
	Kroonstad Central Business District, Public Activation	-	-	1	-	30 October 2024
	South African Air Force Base Bloemspuit	-	-	1	-	31 October 2024
	1 South African Infantry Battalion	-	-	1	-	01 November 2024
	Free State Signal Unit	-	-	1	-	04 November 2024
	Area Military Health Unit Free State	-	-	1	-	05 November 2024
	3 Military Hospital	-	-	1	-	05 November 2024
	Military Police Agency Free State	-	-	1	-	06 November 2024
	Joint Tactical Headquarters Free State	-	-	1	-	06 November 2024
	Mangaung Regiment	-	-	1	-	07 November 2024
	Army Support Base Bloemfontein, Central Military Police Region Headquarters	-	-	1	-	07 November 2024
	1 Special Service Battalion	-	-	1	-	08 November 2024
	Regional Works Unit Free State	-	-	1	-	08 November 2024
	DOD Mobilisation Centre, De Brug	-	-	1	-	28 November 2024
Limpopo	Youth Day Commemoration, Polokwane	1	-	-	-	16 June 2024
	Musina Ops Base	-	1	-	-	05 September 2024
Northern Cape	Military Health Combat Training Centre, Lohatla	1	-	-	-	19 June 2024
	South African Army Combat Training Centre, Lohatla	1	-	-	-	19 June 2024
	Lohatla Signal Unit	1	-	-	-	20 June 2024
	101 Field Workshop, 16 Maintenance Unit	1	-	-	-	20 June 2024
	Mechanised Modern Brigade, Light Modern Brigade	1	-	-	-	20 June 2024



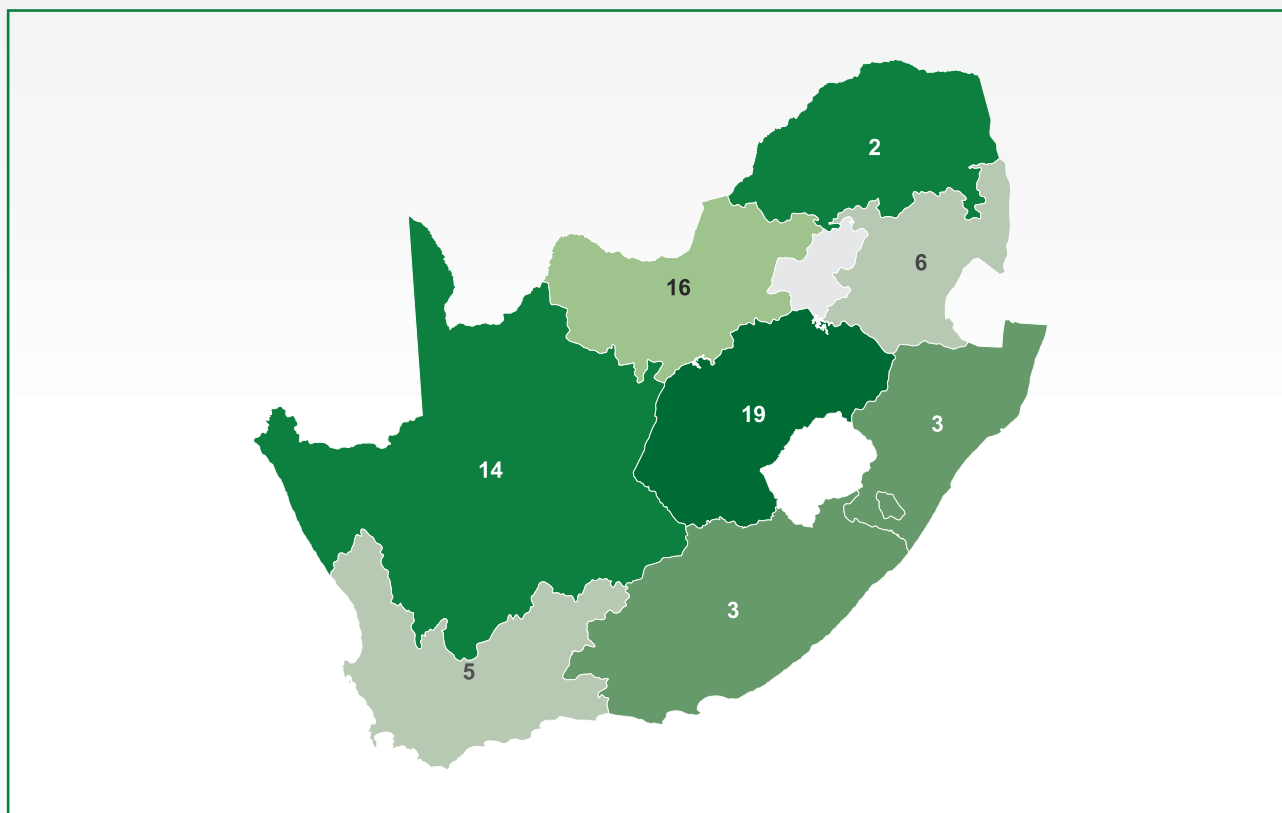
ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

Province	Base/Unit	Planned as per the Outreach Programme				Date Visited
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
a	b	c	d	e	f	g
	525 Squadron, Olifantshoek	1	-	-	-	24 June 2024
	8 South African Infantry Battalion, Upington	1	-	-	-	25 June 2024
	Upington Central Business District and Taxi Rank, Public Activation	1	-	-	-	25 June 2024
	5 Signal Regiment, Alexander Bay	1	-	-	-	27 June 2024
	Army Support Base Kimberley, Northern Cape Signal Unit, Area Military Health Unit Northern Cape	-	1	-	-	29 August 2024
	10 Armoured Regiment	-	1	-	-	30 August 2024
	Department of Defence Ammunition Depot, School of Ammunition, De Aar	-	1	-	-	02 September 2024
	3 South African Infantry Battalion	-	1	-	-	03 September 2024
	93 Ammunition Depot	-	1	-	-	04 September 2024
	Youth Empowerment Expo, Gqeberha	1	-	-	-	28 June 2024
Eastern Cape	Human Rights Day, Kariega	-	-	-	1	21 March 2025
	Maluti Military Base	-	1	-	-	04 September 2024
	Gopane Operational Base	-	1	-	-	03 September 2024
	Army Support Base Potchefstroom	-	-	-	1	05 March 2025
North West	17 Maintenance Unit, Potchefstroom	-	-	-	1	06 March 2025
	Potchefstroom Taxi Rank, Public Activation	-	-	-	1	09 March 2025
	South African Military Health Service North West	-	-	-	1	10 March 2025
	Joint Tactical Headquarters, Mahikeng	-	-	-	1	11 March 2025
	South African Army Signal Information Centre	-	-	-	1	11 March 2025
	General de la Rey Regiment	-	-	-	1	12 March 2025
	10 South African Infantry, Mahikeng	-	-	-	1	12 March 2025
	North West Signal Unit	-	-	-	1	13 March 2025
	Military Veterinary Institute	-	-	-	1	13 March 2025
	School of Artillery, Potchefstroom	-	-	-	1	14 March 2025
	Potchefstroom River Walk Mall, Public Activation	-	-	-	1	15 March 2025
	Chris Hani Field Workshop	-	-	-	1	17 March 2025
	School of Intelligence, Potchefstroom	-	-	-	1	18 March 2025



Province	Base/Unit	Planned as per the Outreach Programme				Date Visited
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
a	b	c	d	e	f	g
Mpumalanga	Tactical Intelligence Regiment	-	-	-	1	19 March 2025
	Macadamia Military Base	-	1	-	-	05 September 2024
	4 South African Infantry Battalion, Middelburg	-	-	1	-	23 October 2024
	Air Defence Artillery Formation, Ermelo	-	-	1	-	24 October 2024
	General Botha Regiment	-	-	1	-	25 October 2024
KwaZulu-Natal	Army Support Base Mpumalanga	-	-	1	-	29 October 2024
	Joint Tactical Headquarters Mpumalanga, Military Police Agency, Area Military Health Unit, Regional Works Unit, Mpumalanga Signal Unit, Legal Satellite Office	-	-	1	-	31 October 2024
	121 Battalion, Mtubatuba,	-	1	-	-	10 September 2024
	Presidential Imbizo exhibition, Mgababa Thusong Centre	-	-	1	-	06 November 2024
	Presidential Imbizo, Mgababa	-	-	1	-	08 November 2023
Western Cape	Mitchell's Plain Festival Exhibition	-	-	1	-	29 to 30 November 2024
	Reconciliation Day Celebration, Vredendal	-	-	1	-	16 December 2024
	State of the Nation Address Government Services Exhibition Day, Langa	-	-	-	1	03 February 2025
	State of the Nation Address Media Development and Diversity Agency Community Radio Stakeholder Engagement, Khayelitsha	-	-	-	1	04 February 2025
	State of the Nation Address National Youth Development Agency Career Exhibition, Khayelitsha	-	1	-	-	05 February 2025
Botswana (International)	International Ombud Expo, Gaborone	-	-	-	1	29 July – 02 August 2024

Figure 12. Number of Military Units visited per Province



Province	Number of Outreaches	Province	Number of Outreaches
a	b	a	b
Free State	19	Mpumalanga	6
Limpopo	2	KwaZulu-Natal	3
Northern Cape	14	Western Cape	5
Eastern Cape	3	Botswana	1
North West	16		
Total	69		

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Office continued to advance its international footprint during the 2024/25 financial year, strengthening strategic alliances and affirming its role as a key player in global and continental efforts to promote the Office. Through active participation in international forums, bilateral exchanges, and visionary initiatives, the Office reinforced its commitment to human rights, the rule of law, and effective governance within the Defence Forces.

As a registered member of the IOI and the AOMA, the Office engaged in several high-level dialogues to enhance the oversight capabilities of ombuds institutions globally. Among these was participation in an AOMA-hosted webinar on “*Championing Children’s Rights in 2025*,” which, though beyond the Office’s core mandate, affirmed its openness to broader human rights discussions and the evolving responsibilities of oversight institutions.



A key highlight of the year was the Office's participation in Botswana's International Ombud Expo (IOE). The Military Ombud chaired and moderated a high-level expert session under the theme "*Silencing the Guns in Africa and AU Agenda 2063*," while the Deputy Military Ombud, Advocate Simphiwe Damane-Mkosana, presented on the unique challenges and responsibilities of deputy ombud roles. These contributions elevated the profile of the Office and demonstrated South Africa's leadership in strengthening military ombud frameworks across Africa.

In parallel, the Office welcomed Hon. Isaque Chande, the Ombudsman of Mozambique, for a courtesy visit to exchange knowledge and share best practices. Such bilateral engagements promote regional learning and collaboration while advancing the Office's broader objective of influencing oversight innovation on the continent.

Central to this mission is a homegrown initiative designed to share the South African Military Ombud model and encourage the development of similar institutions across Africa. Launched in recognition of the Office's successful operational and legislative framework, the project seeks to support countries in creating military ombud institutions that are contextually relevant and independently empowered. Its objectives include legislative advisory support, knowledge exchange, capacity building, and grievance resolution mechanisms.

The relationship between the Office and other Ombudsman Institutions—both within South Africa and across the African continent and abroad has been a cornerstone of the constant external engagements. Invitations to participate in events organised by these institutions strengthened cross-border collaboration and facilitated shared learning on best practices in oversight and complaint resolution. These engagements helped establish the Office as a respected member of the ombud community, contributing to broader regional and international dialogues on improving accountability and transparency in military and public sector services.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Research and Development Unit aims to conduct effective and efficient research and development for the Office, including effective and efficient management of the Research Centre, support and influence policy-making in the Office, help increase the understanding, visibility, and development of the Office's mandate, and contribute to the Office's professional growth and excellence.

To ensure support and influence policy making while increasing the Office's understanding and visibility, the unit conducted and finalised the "*Mapping Study of Systemic Issues Affecting the SANDF Reserve Force Members*". In essence, the study explored the complaint trends and systemic issues adversely affecting the conditions of service of the SANDF Reserve Force members. It provided findings and recommendations to the Chief of the SANDF (C SANDF).

The unit prepared a detailed thematic framework for a panel session moderated by the Military Ombud in Botswana at the 2024 IOE under "*Silencing the Guns in Africa and AU Agenda 2063*". The IOE forms a market place of ideas and innovative solutions: a varied



display of how ombud, human rights, integrity and grievance handling offices effectively tackle a wide range of governance concerns, help reduce corruption, manage conflicts, enhance customer service, drive innovation, defend and promote human rights as well as boost performance and productivity of governments and organisations.

In the reporting period, under the invitation by the DCAF and Kenya's Commission on Administrative Justice, the research unit represented the Office by participating in a seminal panel session titled *"Tackling Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)- The Role of Ombuds Institutions"*, under the umbrella theme *"Security Operating Abroad: Enhancing International Ombuds Cooperation"*. The seminar explored the complexities of SEA, examined current mechanisms in place, and how ombuds institutions can strengthen these efforts through proactive engagement, including by enhancing their understanding of SEA, advocating for systemic policy changes, and leveraging partnerships in prevention and response strategies. Central to this discussion is the pivotal role of local and international partnerships, which may prove instrumental in pooling resources, sharing best practices and leveraging collective expertise.

At the invitation of Public Protector South Africa's conference themed *The Role of Oversight Bodies and Compliance to achieve Good Governance*, the unit compiled a thematic opinion-piece titled *"Ombudsman Values: Leading with Integrity, fairness and compassion"* which was delivered by the Military Ombud at the conference. The conference reflected ways to strengthen the institutions that support constitutional democracy and ensure good governance. The aim was to provide a valuable platform for such reflections, fostering dialogue, collaboration, and innovation to build a more capable, resilient and accountable state.

As part of the Office's dialogue and visibility, the research unit provided much needed elaborate content, thematic conference opening speech and assemblage of subject-specialists for the Annual Military Ombud Symposium, themed *"Affirming and Promoting the Military Ombud's Oversight Responsibility: 30 years into democracy"*, which gathered different stakeholders and role players to share knowledge and best practices within the Defence Force operational practices and good governance. The broader aspirations are to foster transparency, accountability, and justice in public administration, contributing to democratic governance and the rule of law within the Defence Forces.

To contribute to the professional development and excellence and sharing best practices, the Office participated in the sixteenth International Conference of Ombudsman for the Defence Force (16ICOAF) held in Berlin, Germany, which DCAF and the German Parliamentary Commissioner co-hosted. The unit drafted a thematic speech for the Military Ombud for session four of the conference titled *"Support and Care After Deployment – Veteran Aftercare"* whose objective was to shed light on how ombuds institutions can uphold and enhance the various systems of care and support for veterans, focusing on supporting veterans with physical and mental health concerns.

In this vein, the unit conducts on-site and ongoing surveys and mapping studies through the Office's Outreach Programme and Operations Quality Assurance to gather complaints trends and patterns for remedial purposes and reporting.



This exercise serves as a vital platform for shaping and influencing the complaints resolution discourse per the Office's mandate and engaging with diverse local stakeholders.

During the reporting period, the unit has enhanced the knowledge economy of the Office by ensuring that the Research Centre is aptly resourced to aid with the investigation of complaints. Further plans are underway to digitise the reference materials for ease of access and use through the e-Books system. To further enhance institutional cooperations and collaborations, the research unit is currently enhancing knowledge-sharing with Stellenbosch University and other related institutions to broaden the knowledge base of the Office's Operations unit and to leverage relevant training, attendance of seminars, capacity-building associated workshops and events.

PART



D

GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

The Office's Good Governance structures and principles clearly define the distribution of rights and responsibilities among various participants within the organisation. They also establish the rules and procedures for decision-making. The Office has aligned itself with these governance principles and implemented the GRC Framework to support effective and efficient operations.

During the reporting period, the Office continued to enhance internal control systems under Section 45 of the Public Management Finance Act (PFMA). The Office ensured accountability through implementing the SP (2020-2025), APP for the 2024/25 MTEF, Annual Operational Plan for FY2024/25, and required Support Plans.

The daily organisational administration support and management function provided the effective, efficient, and economic resource administration and support services (HR, Finance, Logistics, Procurement of goods and services, and ICT).

Through Executive Committee (EXCO) meetings, Management Committee (MANCO) meetings, and performance dashboards, the Office ensured that the performance outputs and targets were achieved by continuously monitoring, reporting, and taking corrective measures.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

COMMITTEE, AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All the Office's organisational units are the foundation of GRC, providing the culture, discipline, and structure that influence outcomes and outputs, Office activities, and risk identification, assessment, and action.

The Office has taken steps to address its internal governance structures and requirements and has made significant progress. The following internal controls were institutionalised and captured in Table 12 below.

Executive and Management Committee. During the period under review, leadership has managed to improve turnaround times with complaint resolution. Management practices continued to be the foundation of the operations of the Office. The Military Ombud and his Deputy contributed towards strengthening accountability in the Office by ensuring quarterly EXCO meetings and monthly MANCO meetings; they also provided strategic direction on governance, accountability, and effective management.

Governance Committees. The following committees were established to ensure governance is realised:

- Occupational Health and Safety Committee;
- Finance Governance Risk Compliance Sub-Committee; as well as a
- Human Resource Development Committee.



The purpose of the Governance Committees is to serve the Office and assist it in adapting to its changing roles and responsibilities. This means keeping up to speed with rapidly changing information related to governance, risk management, audit issues, accounting, financial reporting, current issues, and future changes, as well as keeping up with National Treasury guidelines and PFMA.

Table 12. Governance Structures

Governance Structure	Function/Aim	Frequency	Chairperson
a	b	c	d
Executive Committee	To provide strategic direction to the Office of the Military Ombud.	Quarterly	Military Ombud
Management Committee	To ensure oversight over the administrative function within the Office of the Military Ombud.	Monthly	Deputy Military Ombud
Military Ombud Dashboard (Operations)	To act as an oversight body ensuring standardisation compliance with service delivery standards.	Monthly	Military Ombud
Intake Assessment Meeting	The management and coordination of the Operations environment's daily activities (i.e., assessment meetings and internal quality assurance meetings for complaints and investigation reports)	Weekly	Chief Director Operations
Quality Assurance Meeting	To guide concerning the standardisation of complaints handling and investigation approach, as well as preliminary and final reports	Fortnightly	Chief Director Operations
Military Ombud Dashboard (Corporate Support)	To act as an oversight body ensuring standardisation compliance with service delivery standards.	Monthly	Military Ombud
Corporate Support Management Meeting	The management and coordination of the Corporate Support environment's daily activities.	Monthly	Chief Corporate Support
Finance Governance Risk Compliance Sub Committee	Ensure the Office has accountable, transparent, cost-effective, efficient and equitable financial management.	Fortnightly	Deputy Military Ombud
Human Resource Development Committee	To promote education, training and development within the organisation to enhance organisational performance	Monthly	Director Investigations



RISK MANAGEMENT

During FY2024/25, the Office continued to ensure that Strategic and Operational risks were managed and reported through management committees and oversight governance structures. These committees were responsible for not only determining the risks that the Ombud is willing and able to take to achieve the mandate, impact, and strategic outcomes but also emphasising that all risks are appropriately identified, evaluated, and managed.

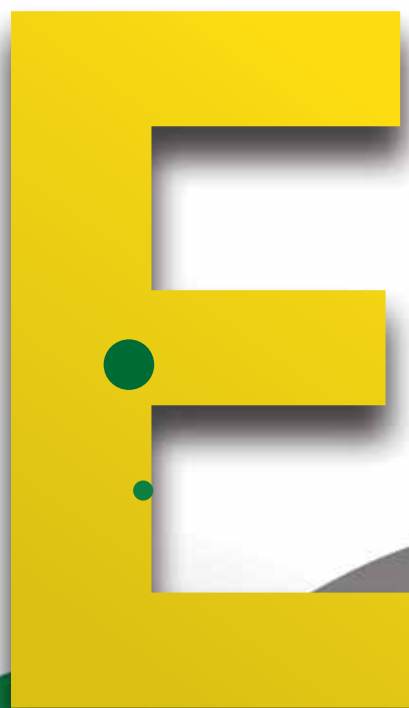
The Office has identified elevated strategic risks and mitigating factors, and is implementing good governance practices such as accountability, transparency, and setting clear objectives.

The Office has institutionalised internal controls, including standard operating procedures and processes, to ensure the effective, efficient, and economical delivery of services.

Table 13. Risk Register for the FY2024/25

Risk Ref No	Risk Description	Risk Response
MO02/19	<p>The lack of institutional independence. The Military Ombud Act, Act 4 of 2012, does not address the scope of the Military Ombud function, which influences the accountability framework, resolution enforcement and powers.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Act is not aligned with higher-order legislation (PFMA) concerning reporting timeframes.</p> <p>The Military Ombud's credibility to deliver on the mandate is compromised due to a lack of understanding and trust among all stakeholders.</p>	<p>The Office will follow the Legislative amendment/review process to ensure alignment of the Military Ombud Act with the appropriate organisational form identified.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Office will conduct outreach events, including radio interviews, to promote its image, clarify its mandate, and engage with stakeholders to ensure that the Office is seen as independent regarding finalising complaints.</p>
MO01/20	<p>Shortfall in the Compensation of Employees Budget. Since the Office was created as a line item, numerous requests were submitted to the DOD explaining that the allocation did not fulfil the required number of staffed posts.</p>	<p>The Military Ombud will continue to address this matter with the Executive Authority.</p>
Risk Ref No	Risk Description	Risk Response
MO01/22	<p>Slow turnaround in finalisation of investigations due to slow response by Services and Divisions. There are mainly three (3) factors that influence the slow turnaround times concerning the finalisation of complaints, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-receipt of timely response from DOD (Services and Divisions); • Unavailability of information from DOD archives; and • Lack of cooperation among stakeholders 	<p>Enforcement of MOU with Stakeholders and Service Level Agreements.</p> <p>The Military Ombud and CSANDF engage in monthly engagements, and the Office and SANDF hold monthly liaison forums to monitor progress.</p>

PART



CORPORATE SUPPORT



PURPOSE

Corporate Support provides effective, efficient, and professional resource support services to enable the Office to achieve its mandate.

To ensure effective, efficient, and professional resource support services for the Office to achieve its mandate, Corporate Support provided management and resource support functions, which include HR, Fin, Log, ICT, Policy, Strategy and Planning and Facilities, Security and Reception Management.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Office values its most important resource, its employees. A systematic approach to developing and implementing HR Management functions, policies, and plans aligned with the organisation's strategy was taken to ensure effective retention strategies.

Planned Strength, Employment and Vacancies. The strength scheduled for the Office, Tables 14 and 15 below, was 63 for the FY2024/25. However, during the review period, the Office could only achieve a strength of 58 employees. The decline in personnel strength was due to delays in the recruiting process and unplanned attritions.

Table 14. Strength as at 31 March 2025

Environment	Planned Strength	Actual Strength
a	b	c
Executive	7	6
Operations	36	34
Support	20	18
Total	63	58

Table 15. Employment and Vacancies as at 31 March 2025

Environment	Approved Posts	Staffed Posts	Vacant Posts
a	b	c	d
Executive	7	6	1
Operations	36	34	2
Support	20	18	2
Total	63	58	5

Compensation of Employees. The Office Item 10 Vote for FY2024/25 was R45,619 million, representing 60% of the allocation. R49,560 million was paid, leading to an over-expenditure of R3,941 million on the COE, as seen in Tables 16 and 17.


Table 16. Compensation of Employees as at 31 March 2025

Expenditure	Number of Approved Posts	Number of Staffed Posts	Rand Value
a	b	c	d
Total Expenditure	89	58	Rm49,560

Education, Training, and Development. The Office provided learning opportunities and skills training to enhance employees' knowledge and skills and create a competent workforce and a learning culture. Table 17 below indicates the number of learning opportunities provided during the financial year.

Table 17. Education, Training and Development Opportunities as at 31 March 2025

Environment	Short Courses/Symposium/Conference
a	b
Combined Training	83

Employment Equity Figures. The Office demographics show an underrepresentation of the coloured and white races. This is due to low responses to job advertisements for both race categories.

Table 18. Employment Equity Figures as at 31 March 2025

Environment	Male				Female			
	African	Indian	Coloured	White	African	Indian	Coloured	White
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Executive	2	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Operations	15	1	0	2	16	0	0	0
Support	7	0	0	1	7	0	1	2
Total	24	1	0	3	27	0	1	2

Attrition. Table 19 below indicates the unplanned attritions during the FY2024/25. The Office could call up reserves to bridge the gap as an intervention.

Table 19. Attrition as at 31 March 2025

Environment	Attrition Number
a	b
Resignation	2



OFFICE OF THE MILITARY OMBUD EXPENDITURE

PERSONNEL EXPENDITURE

Personnel expenditures increased from R45,215 million in the 2023/24 financial year to R49,560 million in the 2024/25 financial year. During the financial year, several vacancies reduced the over-expenditure.

Should the posts have been staffed, the personnel expenditure would have exceeded the allocation. The allocation of the Office for the COE does not represent the sixty-three (63) staffed posts of the Office. The staffed posts were not considered when the Office became a line item in the National Treasury (NT) letter of allocation, as the COE allocation by the DOD was based on the NT ceiling.

OPERATING EXPENDITURE

Operating expenditure increased from R13,370 million in the 2023/24 financial year to R16,219 million in the 2024/25 financial year. The variance of R2,849 million results from interventions to improve the lead times in procuring goods and services while remaining within prescripts. There were still numerous delays in the procurement processes, resulting in the Office being unable to utilise its allocated funds in the financial year and thus unable to meet several of its objectives and focus areas of the Military Ombud.

Table 20. Expenditure Report for the Office of the Military Ombud as at 31 March 2025

Standard Chart of Accounts Level 3 Description	Standard Chart of Accounts Level 4 Description	Vote R'000	Final Appropriation R'000	Amount Paid R'000
a	b	c	d	e
Compensation of Employees	Salaries and Wages	40,211	40,211	43,647
	Social Contributions	5,407	5,407	5,914
Compensation of Employees Total		45,619	45,619	49,560
Goods and Services	Administrative Fees: Payments	0	82	65
	Advertising	2,988	4,106	1,832
	Catering Departmental Activities	294	88	88
	Communication	1,178	825	545
	Computer Services	1,495	2,965	2,287
	Consumables Supplies	430	306	231
	Consumables Stationery Print and Office Supplies	812	228	220
	Consultants Business and Advisory Services	3,762	1,347	3
	Contractors	94	95	41
	Entertainment	20	20	6
	Fleet Services	161	295	273
	Inv: Chemicals, Fuel, Gas, Wood and Coal	440	159	257
	Inv: Clothing Material and Accessories	31	86	51
	Inv: Food and Food Supplies	72	29	25
	Inv: Materials and Supplies	70	53	45



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

Standard Chart of Accounts Level 3 Description	Standard Chart of Accounts Level 4 Description	Vote	Final Appropriation	Amount Paid
		R'000	R'000	R'000
a	b	c	d	e
	Inv: Medical Supplies	55	0	0
	Minor Assets	20	312	84
	Operating Payments	706	931	523
	Property Payments	1,309	1,918	1,682
	Science and Technology Services	660	0	0
	Training and Development	2,630	1,834	1,222
	Travel and Subsistence	4,017	4,418	3,466
	Venues and Facilities	314	314	46
Goods and Services Total		21,558	20,409	12,992
Payments Total		67,177	66,028	62,552
Departmental Agencies and Accounts	Transfers and Subsidies Departmental Agencies	1	1	1
Provincial and Local Government	Transfers and subsidies to Municipalities	14	14	13
Households	Employee Social Benefits	105	105	160
Transfers and Subsidies Total		120	120	174
Machinery and Equipment	Other Machinery and Equipment	557	1726	909
	Transport Equipment	2,310	2,131	1,970
Software and Intangible Assets	Software and Other Intangible Assets	15	70	70
Buildings and Other Fixed Structures	Buildings	0	103	103
Purchase and Construction Capital Assets Total		2,882	4,031	3,052
Grand Total		70,179	70,179	65,779



INSIGHTS FROM COMPLAINT OUTCOMES

INTRODUCTION

The resolution of complaints during the 2024/25 financial year reflects the Military Ombud's ongoing commitment to accessible, fair, and timely redress. A total of 593 complaints were resolved during the reporting period, with notable improvements in resolution turnaround time and an increasing proportion of cases being concluded within the targeted performance timelines.

This section presents selected complaint outcomes that illustrate the range and complexity of matters addressed by the Ombud. The insights derived from these cases highlight the practical application of administrative justice and recurring challenges experienced by complainants, systemic issues within the Defence environment, and the importance of clear communication and procedural fairness. Each example has been anonymised and chosen for its representative value in demonstrating how the Ombud's intervention contributed to resolution, policy clarification, or administrative improvement. Together, these insights offer a window into the human impact of our work and underscore the value of independent oversight in strengthening trust and accountability within the military context.

COMPLAINT 1: TERMINATION OF SERVICE – CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES

On 23 May 2024, the Office received complaints from 237 members of the public residing in Mpumalanga. The Complainants were former DOD employees who had served as cleaners and groundsman at the South African Air Force Base Hoedspruit (AFB HSPT). They alleged that in the 1990s, they had formally requested their employer to provide transportation via military duty buses to facilitate their daily commute to and from work.

According to the Complainants, they were verbally assured by management at AFB HSPT that duty buses would be allocated based on their residential areas and were instructed to await further communication. Contrary to expectations, they were subsequently denied access to the base, resulting in their prolonged absence from duty. The absence was later classified as unauthorised, and their services were terminated because they were absent without official leave. The Complainants contended that they did not receive any termination benefits or pension payouts following their dismissal and requested the intervention of the Office to investigate the circumstances of their termination and facilitate access to any benefits owed.

Following a jurisdictional assessment, it was established that the matter concerned the termination of service of Public Service Act Personnel, which falls outside the mandate of the Military Ombud as outlined in section 4(1)(a)-(d) of the Act. During the preliminary investigation, the matter was found to have been subject to litigation in a civilian court. In terms of section 7(1)(b) and (c), read with section 4 of the Act, the Ombud is precluded from investigating any complaint that is pending before or has already been adjudicated by a military or civilian court.



Accordingly, in line with section 6(7)(c) of the Act, the Office referred the Complainants to the Chief of Human Resources (C HR) and the Secretary for Defence for further engagement and appropriate intervention, as the matter fell outside the Ombud's jurisdiction.

COMPLAINT 2: ALLEGED UNFAIR WITHDRAWAL FROM MILITARY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Office received a complaint from a former SANDF recruit. The Complainant alleged that he had been unfairly withdrawn from the South African Army (SA Army) MSDS 2024 Intake on the grounds of medical unfitness. Following his withdrawal, the Complainant sought an independent medical opinion, which found him fit for military training. On this basis, he approached the Office seeking reinstatement into the training programme.

In investigating the matter, the Office engaged with the South African Military Health Service (SAMHS), which outlined the medical evaluation process applicable during the assembly phase of the MSDS intake. It was confirmed that all applicants must comply with medical fitness standards, and that any presenting or reported condition is subject to clinical review and further investigation as required.

In the Complainant's case, SAMHS reported that he had voluntarily disclosed a history of surgery in an affidavit. This prompted a comprehensive assessment by a medical officer, following which he was referred for further investigation. His medical classification was determined as G3K2, a profile carrying specific restrictions including a prohibition on driving military vehicles, handling weapons, or operating power-driven machinery. These limitations rendered him medically unfit for service under the MSDS criteria, which require a classification of G1K1.

The Office sourced additional medical documentation confirming this classification and the underlying restrictions with the Complainant's consent. It also emerged that the Complainant had been fully informed of the basis for his withdrawal and had signed an acknowledgement of the reasons provided.

After thoroughly reviewing the applicable regulatory framework, including the medical standards governing entry into the MSDS, the Military Ombud found no evidence of procedural or substantive unfairness in the withdrawal process. Accordingly, the complaint was dismissed in section 6(7)(a) of the Act.

In line with standard procedure, the Complainant was advised of their right to approach the High Court within 180 days to seek a judicial review of the Ombud's decision, under section 13 of the Act.



COMPLAINT 3: DELAYED PAYMENT OF MEDICAL BENEFITS

A former SANDF member lodged a complaint concerning the delayed payment for a medical service he had received with prior approval. The matter concerns replacing a lower leg prosthesis, which was initially used for over six years. In 2021, the Complainant applied for a new prosthesis, which was subsequently approved by the relevant military authority on 20 April 2023. Following this approval, he engaged the services of a private Medical Orthotist and Prosthetist, who completed the procedure at a cost of R53,217.06 and submitted the invoice to the SANDF's Medical Accounts Department.

Despite being rendered in May 2023, the Complainant later discovered that the service provider had not been paid. Upon further inquiry, the invoice initially contained incorrect military details due to a clerical error. The error was rectified, and a revised invoice was submitted on 28 November 2023. However, despite multiple follow-ups by the Complainant and the medical practitioner to the Area Military Health Unit KwaZulu-Natal and the Medical Accounts Department in Pretoria, no further communication or resolution followed.

Concerned about the ongoing delay and the potential legal consequences faced by the practitioner, the Complainant approached the Office seeking intervention and the prompt settlement of the outstanding payment.

Upon the Ombud's intervention, the SAMHS confirmed on 07 May 2024 that the invoice had been processed and the practitioner had received payment in full. The Complainant confirmed his satisfaction with the outcome and thanked the Investigating Officer for the professionalism and transparency demonstrated throughout the process.

In line with the provisions of section 6(6)(b) of the Act, the matter was resolved amicably through corrective action by the SANDF, prompted by the Office's involvement.

COMPLAINT 4: PENSION AND FUNERAL BENEFIT DELAYS

The son of a deceased former SANDF member, who passed away on 14 July 2022, submitted a complaint. Acting on behalf of his late father's estate, the Complainant submitted documentation to the DOD in January 2023, seeking to process the pension and funeral benefits. He raised concerns about the lack of communication and prolonged delays in finalising the benefits.

In response to the Ombud's inquiries, it was confirmed that the deceased contributed to the pension fund and was covered under the SA Army Foundation's funeral and life insurance schemes. While the funeral and life cover had been paid to the surviving spouse in July 2024, the DOD Pension Administration cited the absence of required legal documentation as the main reason for the delay in processing the pension benefit.

Telephonic interviews confirmed that the Complainant had not been appointed as the Executor of the estate and, as such, lacked the legal standing to represent the estate in formal pension claims.



Following a review of the applicable regulatory framework and the Complainant's status, the Office found that the matter could not be pursued further until the required appointment was obtained. The complaint was therefore dismissed in terms of section 6(7)(a) of the Act. The Complainant was informed that obtaining a Letter of Executorship from the Master of the High Court would be necessary to pursue any further claims on behalf of the estate.

This case illustrates the importance of ensuring legal standing when acting on behalf of deceased members, particularly concerning financial and estate matters.

COMPLAINT 5: INCORRECT IMPLEMENTATION OF SALARY GRADING

A dentist serving in the SANDF submitted a complaint concerning the long-standing failure to implement a rectification instruction related to her salary grade. Appointed in 2003 as a Staff Officer 1, she was incorrectly placed on salary level 10 instead of level 11. Although an audit was conducted in 2008, only a partial correction was made in 2009. She was informed then that the issue would be resolved automatically through the Occupation-Specific Dispensation (OSD) process. However, the initial error persisted, and she was translated into OSD with the discrepancy intact.

Had the correction occurred in 2008, she would have been eligible for progression to Chief Dentist (level 12) and Clinical Grade 2 by 2009. Instead, she only reached Clinical Grade 2 in 2016. The Complainant lodged a formal grievance in 2016, which was eventually upheld by the C SANDF, who instructed the salary to be corrected. Despite this, the directive remained unimplemented.

As her retirement approached in March 2025, the Complainant sought the Ombud's assistance to expedite the matter, citing concerns over its impact on her pension benefits.

The investigation revealed that the Chief Directorate of Human Resource Management had failed to implement or acknowledge the instruction. The documentation reviewed showed that the original appointment at level 10 was in error, and subsequent audits relied on salary scales misaligned with the Complainant's attested rank. The findings confirmed that the audit outcomes were fundamentally flawed and failed to reflect the Complainant's legitimate claim.

Further investigation confirmed the Surgeon General's endorsement of her re-appointment as Principal Dentist (level 11) effective 1 November 2003 and functional promotion to Chief Dentist (level 12) effective 1 November 2006. The C SANDF supported this recommendation, but the relevant HR authorities had not acted upon it.

The complaint was upheld in section 6(7)(a) of the Act. The Office recommended that the C SANDF instruct the C HR to implement the rectification, ensuring that the correction is effected before the Complainant's retirement date. The failure to execute the C SANDF directive highlighted administrative inefficiencies and the need to implement grievance resolutions promptly to safeguard members' financial entitlements.



COMPLAINT 6: APPLICATION FOR CONDONATION – SERVICE TERMINATION

The Office received a complaint from a serving member of the SANDF, stationed at the South African Ship Immortelle (SAS Immortelle), accompanied by an application for condonation of late referral in terms of Section 7(2)(c) of the Act, read with Regulation 6 of the Military Ombud Complaints Regulations, 2015.

The complaint centred on an alleged irregular termination of service, following events that unfolded in August 2022. The Applicant was booked off sick from 01 to 03 August 2022 and extended his absence upon recognising the need for further recovery. He reported for duty on 24 August 2022 and simultaneously submitted a formal resignation. However, he was subsequently verbally informed that he had been dismissed in terms of Section 59(3) of the Defence Act 42 of 2002 for failing to report for duty. His salary was suspended, his resignation was not processed, and he was denied access to South African Navy (SA Navy) premises and official documentation, including the statement relating to his resignation.

Despite his efforts to clarify the situation, including a formal retraction of his resignation and requests to be reinstated, the Applicant received no resolution. He raised concerns about procedural irregularities, namely:

- The absence of formal notification regarding the suspension of his salary;
- The failure to communicate the non-approval of his resignation;
- The delay in the finalisation of the Board of Inquiry (BOI); and
- The mischaracterisation of his absence as unauthorised, despite a valid medical certificate.

The Applicant submitted that these irregularities caused undue financial and emotional hardship, given the lack of income and unresolved employment status.

In assessing the condonation application, the Office took cognisance of relevant case law, including *Abrahams v EOH Mthombo (Pty) Ltd* [2021] ZALCJHB 313, which requires that a late referral must have a reasonable prospect of success; *Maphai v South African Forestry SOC Ltd* (JR 1021/19), which emphasises the impact of delay on the applicant; and *Balmer & Another v Reddam (Bedfordview) (Pty) Ltd* (2011) 32 ILJ 2121 (LC), which considers prejudice to the opposing party. Based on these principles, it was determined that SA Navy would not suffer undue prejudice should the complaint be investigated.

Accordingly, the Military Ombud condoned the late submission of the complaint in terms of Regulation 6(2) of the Military Ombud Complaints Regulations. The matter was admitted for investigation with the focus on:

- The causes and accountability for the delay in finalising the BOI;
- The lawfulness of the salary suspension;
- The grounds upon which the Applicant was denied access to duty.



This case illustrates the critical importance of procedural fairness, effective communication, and compliance with internal human resource frameworks. The pending investigation will determine whether the Applicant's employment termination and salary suspension were justified, and whether remedial action, including reinstatement of benefits, is appropriate.

COMPLAINT 7: NON-INCLUSION IN THE MILITARY DISPENSATION (MD)

On or about 13 April 2023, the Office received a complaint from a former member of the South African Army Gymnasium (SA Army Gym) regarding his alleged non-inclusion in the Military Dispensation (MD). The Complainant stated that he had been employed at SA Army Gym for twenty-three (23) years and was removed from his post as Workshop Foreman on 06 May 2021, as reflected on the PERSOL system. He alleged that this removal occurred without any formal notice or prior consultation.

In April 2022, the Complainant briefly received MD benefits, which were cancelled the following month because he no longer occupied a technical post. He contended that he was never officially informed of his removal from the post and had not requested such a change. The Complainant submitted letters to the Formation on 11 July 2022 and 09 January 2023 to enquire about the matter, but received no feedback.

The Complainant further indicated that he submitted a formal grievance on 22 November 2022. However, the grievance was only officially captured in the system on 06 February 2023 under ID number 8640, and no response was provided when lodging the complaint with the Ombud.

In April 2023, the Complainant was placed in a Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) post in Nelspruit, to be utilised at SA Army Gym in Heidelberg. Following this placement, his MD was reactivated, and upon his retirement in June 2023, he received MD benefits for the final three months of his service (April to June 2023).

The Complainant alleged that he had unfairly lost a full year of MD, which impacted his pension contributions, monthly income, and associated benefits such as the birthday bonus. He sought intervention from the Military Ombud to secure retrospective MD payments from 01 April 2022 to his retirement date of 30 June 2023.

The investigation revealed that the Complainant was placed in an additional structure with effect from 06 May 2021, following an instruction from Chief SA Army Human Resources that members aged 57 years and older be placed as such.

The Complainant had not requested this placement and continued to fulfil his previous duties, including managing his section, due to the absence of the new incumbent.

Despite performing the responsibilities of his former post, the Complainant was not transferred to MD when it was implemented on 01 April 2022, owing to the technicality that he was not occupying a formal post. This exclusion negatively affected his income and pension, while the SANDF benefited from his continued technical duties without awarding the associated allowances.



The investigation also found that the Complainant's grievance was not processed following the requirements of the Individual Grievances Regulations (IGR) process, resulting in non-compliance with prescribed timeframes by the SA Army.

The complaint was upheld in terms of section 6(7)(a) of the Act. It was recommended that:

- The C SANDF consider paying the Complainant MD benefits for the period 01 April 2022 to 30 June 2023, including all associated allowances;
- The Complainant's salary scale and pension be recalculated to reflect the missed MD benefits;
- The SA Army be sensitised to implement systems ensuring compliance with IGR timeframes, to prevent future procedural lapses.

COMPLAINT 8: ALLEGED UNFAIR SERVICE TERMINATION

The Office received a complaint regarding alleged unfair service termination from a member enlisted in the MSDS. The Complainant alleged that her service was prematurely terminated after it was discovered in February 2023 that she was pregnant. She was withdrawn from a functional course and returned to her unit, where she was informed during subsequent meetings that her service would be terminated on account of her pregnancy.

The Complainant applied for re-mustering due to the unavailability of posts in her mustering, but her application was not considered. She also alleged that she was denied the opportunity to complete the contract renewal process. Instead, she was later offered a Reserve Force contract and sought the Military Ombud's intervention to be granted a Core Service System (CSS) contract.

The investigation established that the Complainant had entered into a two-year fixed-term MSDS contract, which included a clause allowing termination on medical grounds, including pregnancy. The termination process was initiated in August 2023, shortly before the birth of her child on 30 August 2023. However, the Complainant remained in service beyond the birth of her child and ultimately completed the full term of her MSDS contract.

It was found that the rationale for initiating her termination was to safeguard the health of both mother and child during training and deployment. However, following the birth, the medical condition no longer applied, and the termination grounds were no longer valid. The Respondent issued the Complainant a Reserve Force contract and paid her a completion bonus, confirming successful fulfilment of her MSDS obligations.

Nonetheless, it was confirmed that the Complainant was not allowed to be considered for re-mustering or to apply for a CSS contract. The Respondent treated the initial termination decision as final, failing to reassess her eligibility once the pregnancy-related concern had resolved.



While there was no inherent right to be granted a CSS contract, the Complainant was entitled to a fair and transparent selection process.

The complaint was partially upheld, and the following recommendations were made:

- That the Respondent consider the Complainant for a CSS contract based on her completed service and eligibility;
- Appropriate disciplinary measures should be taken against officials who failed to afford the Complainant procedural fairness in the re-mustering and CSS application process.

COMPLAINT 9: REMUNERATION – ALLOWANCES

On 30 August 2024, a former Reserve Force member of the SANDF lodged a complaint with the Office, accompanied by an application for condonation due to the delayed submission. The Complainant sought redress for unpaid technical allowances, reimbursement of R600 spent during an official duty trip, compensation for unused leave credits, and a review of the premature termination of his call-up contract upon reaching the age of 65.

The Complainant cited unawareness of regulatory timeframes and verbal assurances from senior officers as reasons for the delay. Regarding Regulation 4 of the Military Ombud Complaints Regulations, 2015, the Ombud considered whether the reasons provided warranted condonation.

Following an assessment of the merits, the Ombud found that the claims regarding unpaid technical allowances and the R600 reimbursement warranted further investigation. However, the allegations relating to leave credits and the call-up termination lacked sufficient prospects of success, particularly as Reserve Force members are not entitled to leave pay-outs, and the termination aligned with retirement policy.

Given potential prejudice to the Complainant and the interests of justice, the Ombud granted condonation for the late submission related to the unpaid technical allowances and the reimbursement claim, but declined condonation for the remaining matters.

The complaint remains under active investigation.

COMPLAINT 10: BENEFITS – MILITARY ACCOMMODATION

A former SANDF member approached the Office following an incident in November 2021, in which he and his spouse were denied entry to military accommodation at an SA Navy base. The Complainant had retired five months prior and had entered into a monthly rental agreement with the Base, pending the completion of his private residence. The Complainant and his spouse had temporarily left the premises on the night in question due to load shedding. They were returning with food, leaving their daughter, who was preparing for examinations, inside the house.



Upon their return, they were denied access by guards allegedly instructed by a Commander to refuse entry. The Complainant claimed this was linked to allegations of his failure to maintain the property as required by a previous inspection. He and his spouse were forced to spend the night in their vehicle and were only allowed access the following morning after senior intervention. The Complainant was later forcibly removed from the premises and relocated to an open plot of land where he was constructing his new home.

The Complainant requested redress against the implicated Commander, compensation for violating his rights, and reimbursement for property damages.

The investigation confirmed that the Complainant's extended occupation of state housing after retirement was irregular. It contravened the State Housing Policy, which limits post-retirement occupation to three months with approval. However, the Commander acted outside policy by instructing sentries to deny entry without following legal eviction procedures. Furthermore, the Unit failed to obtain a court order, as required in such circumstances.

The complaint was upheld in section 6(7)(a) of the Act. It was recommended that:

- The MOD&MV direct the C SANDF to consider disciplinary action against the implicated Commander;
- The Unit (SAS Saldanha) receives training on appropriate procedures for managing housing-related disputes and evictions.

The Complainant's civil claims for compensation fell outside the Military Ombud's mandate in this instance and were not considered.

COMPLAINT 11: REMUNERATION – SALARY AND BENEFITS

In February 2025, a former member of the SANDF lodged a complaint with the Office concerning salary discrepancies and the non-payment of outstanding service benefits. The Complainant had served continuously from February 2024 until his retirement in January 2025. He alleged that during October and November 2024, his salary was short-paid. When queried, he was informed that this was due to irregular attendance at work. The Complainant disputed this, asserting he was present and had supporting proof.

In addition to the salary matter, the Complainant sought reimbursement for counter-claims allegedly submitted three years earlier and enquired about payment for unused leave credits.

The Military Ombud assessed whether the complaint was lodged within the permissible timeframe. As it was filed within 180 days, no condonation was required. Upon review, it was confirmed via PERSOL records that short payments occurred in the specified months. The Reserve Force Headquarters clarified that members are not entitled to leave credit pay-outs upon retirement. Furthermore, no grievance or documentary evidence could be found to support the counter-claim reimbursement, and the matter was not substantiated.



The complaint regarding short salary payment was accepted for investigation. The Complainant was advised that, due to the lack of information, the counter-claim matter could not proceed unless further evidence was provided.

The investigation into the salary matter remains ongoing.

COMPLAINT 12: PROMOTION – MILITARY LAW PRACTITIONER

The Complainant approached the Office following delays in implementing a promotion to a Colonel post within the Joint Operations Division. The submission for his promotion was made in 2018, subsequently supported by the C HR, and approved by the C SANDF on 16 October 2019. However, the Complainant, a Military Law Practitioner (MLP), was serving at level ML4 and required Ministerial Authority for functional promotion to level ML6, per the Personnel Management Code for MLPs.

The Complainant sought the implementation of the SANDF's decision, supported by the Adjutant General's instruction dated 28 October 2019. He requested a retrospective salary adjustment to ML6, claiming decisions had unfairly prejudiced him at a higher command level.

The investigation confirmed that while the Complainant's nomination was supported, he had not met the eligibility requirement of three years' service as a Lieutenant Colonel, having only completed two years at the time of the recommendation. Consequently, he was granted a temporary Colonel rank from 01 November 2019, with substantive promotion effected on 01 November 2020. Ministerial approval for functional promotion to ML6 was subsequently denied in February 2021 to maintain compliance with established policy. The Complainant progressed to ML5 on 01 April 2022 and is projected to become eligible for ML6 in 2027.

The Military Ombud found no irregularity in the promotion's processing, and the denial of retrospective salary adjustment was consistent with policy. Accordingly, the complaint was dismissed.

COMPLAINT 13: UNFAIR TERMINATION OF SERVICE – CHAPLAINCY

The Complainant, a Chaplain seconded to the SANDF by his church, alleged that he was unfairly discharged from the DOD after resigning from his church in 2023. Although he attempted to withdraw his resignation the day before it took effect, the higher authority within the church did not accept the withdrawal. He further alleged inconsistent policy application, noting that other Chaplains who had transitioned from seconding churches were not discharged. Additionally, he submitted that his formal grievance on the matter was not finalised before his discharge in February 2024.

As relief, the Complainant sought reinstatement into the SANDF Chaplain Service.

The investigation confirmed that the Complainant was seconded by his church, and upon resignation, he forfeited this status. Furthermore, he ceased participating in the church's activities, and no formal support for his reinstatement was received from the seconding



authority. While the termination of service was found to be procedurally sound, the investigation revealed that the Complainant's grievance (No. 09119) had not been finalised within the prescribed timeframes, resulting in administrative unfairness.

The Military Ombud upheld the grievance-handling complaint and recommended that the Chaplain Service Division be sensitised regarding compliance with the IGR, 2016. However, the main complaint relating to the termination of service was dismissed.

COMPLAINT 14: CONDONATION – APPLICATION RELATING TO SERVICE BENEFITS

The Complainant, a former member of the SANDF, lodged a complaint regarding compensation for injuries allegedly sustained during physical training at Riemvasmaak Training Area, which he claimed led to his early retirement in 1998. He submitted that a 1996 request for a medical board was lost, delaying appropriate medical classification. A further assessment was eventually conducted on 23 January 2019 at 6 South African Infantry (SAI) Battalion, at which point compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder and injuries was proposed pending completion of treatment. Additionally, the Complainant sought assistance with awarding two military medals, which a senior officer had recommended at the time.

As the complaint was lodged outside the prescribed 180-day period, the Complainant was required to submit an application for condonation per Regulation 6(1) of the Military Ombud Complaints Regulations, 2015.

Upon review, the Office noted that the 2019 medical assessment had been initiated by the Government Pensions Administration Agency (GPAA), not the SANDF, as the Complainant was no longer a serving member. Further inquiry revealed that the delay in submitting the complaint was inadequately explained, and no supporting documentation was provided to substantiate the medical claims. Moreover, the IOD compensation claims fall under the mandate of the GPAA in this instance and lie outside the jurisdiction of the Military Ombud.

Based on these findings, condonation was not granted due to poor prospects of success and lateness. The complaint regarding IOD compensation was referred to the Public Protector South Africa in terms of Section 6(7)(c) of the Act, and the Complainant was advised to pursue the medal matter with the Directorate HR Maintenance.

COMPLAINT 15: PLACEMENT AND PROMOTION – WARRANT OFFICER POST

The Complainant approached the Office, dissatisfied with a non-promotion outcome. In 2021, the General Officer Commanding recommended the Complainant and four others for placement and promotion into WO2 posts. However, only two promotions were ultimately effected, as two of the four available posts were reported to have been removed from the Unit structure. The Complainant, being one of those not promoted, lodged a grievance, which did not resolve the matter to his satisfaction.

He subsequently sought retrospective promotion to WO2, effective 2021.



The investigation established that the Complainant had no accrued right to promotion, as he was not placed in a vacant and funded WO2 post. It was further confirmed that the two members promoted were senior to the Complainant, and only two funded posts were available then. Nonetheless, the Complainant was duly considered for promotion, and the selection process adhered to the required procedures.

The Military Ombud concluded that there were no procedural irregularities and dismissed the complaint in terms of Section 6(7)(a) of the Act.

COMPLAINT 16: RECRUITMENT – MILITARY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Complainant submitted a complaint following her unsuccessful application to the 2024 MSDS intake of the South African Air Force (SAAF). After receiving an invitation to participate in the selection process, she attended the assessment held at 5 SAI Battalion on 03 October 2023. She completed all required stages, including psychometric testing, medical evaluation, and a formal interview.

In December 2023, her mother received a missed call from a number identified as belonging to a SAAF member. Efforts to return the call were unsuccessful. Ms Boyi subsequently visited the SAAF Headquarters and was informed that the selected candidates had already departed for training. She was further advised that, due to age restrictions and the absence of a tertiary qualification, she was ineligible to reapply for the 2025 intake.

The Complainant sought the Military Ombud's assistance to be admitted to the programme, arguing that she had raised her concerns in time.

The investigation found that the SAAF recruitment process complied with the regulatory framework governing MSDS intakes. While the Complainant completed the selection process, this did not guarantee placement. Recruitment was based on merit and institutional considerations, including budget and demographic targets. The absence of a formal call-up notification indicated that she had not been selected.

The Military Ombud found no evidence of unfair treatment or irregularity and dismissed the complaint.

COMPLAINT 17: OFFICIAL CONDUCT – NON-PAYMENT FOR SERVICES RENDERED

A service provider lodged a complaint with the Office concerning non-payment for repair services rendered to the DOD. The service provider had been contracted in May 2024 to repair two toilets at a DOD unit. The work was completed and approved on 15 June 2024; an invoice was submitted on 24 June 2024.

After experiencing payment delays beyond the 30-day timeframe stipulated by Treasury Regulations under the Public Finance Management Act, the Complainant approached the Office for intervention.



The investigation revealed that the initial invoice contained incorrect details, which contributed to the delay. Following the Ombud's intervention, the service provider was requested to submit a corrected invoice, after which the DOD processed the payment accordingly.

The matter was resolved through the Office's facilitation, as required by Section 6(6)(b) of the Act.

COMPLAINT 18: OFFICIAL CONDUCT – BREACH OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

On 4 July 2024, the Office received a complaint from a member of the public on behalf of a private company, alleging improper official conduct by a SANDF unit. The matter concerned a contractual dispute related to a swimming pool renovation. The company initially submitted a quotation of R5.8 million, which was declined due to financial constraints. A revised quotation of around R2.65 million was subsequently accepted, and the company was formally appointed on 3 October 2023.

The agreement entailed phased payments—30% upon completion of phases one and two, and 70% upon final completion. While the first two phases were completed and paid for, complications arose during phase three due to the failure of underground piping attributed to ageing infrastructure. Despite advising that a complete system replacement was required, the company was instructed to amend the scope of work in line with budgetary constraints.

Negotiations between March and July 2024 failed to yield a resolution. The department proposed a cost-sharing arrangement for the remaining work, withholding the outstanding amount of roughly R1.82 million. The Complainant found this position unreasonable, as the additional costs fell outside the agreed-upon scope.

The Office investigated the matter in terms of Section 4(1)(c) of the Act, which empowers it to address complaints from members of the public relating to official conduct. The investigation established that a valid and binding agreement existed and that the department's actions amounted to a breach thereof. The complaint was upheld, and the outstanding payment was subsequently made to the Complainant.

COMPLAINT 19: CORPS TRANSFER – DECLINED DUE TO HISTORICAL DISCIPLINARY RECORD

The Office received a complaint from a member of the SA Army regarding the refusal of his application to transfer from the Infantry Corps to the Ordnance Service Corps. The member had obtained a Diploma in Transport Management from the University of Johannesburg and, in 2015, submitted all requisite documentation to initiate the transfer process. However, the application was declined based on a disciplinary offence committed in 2002. The decision relied on a directive from the Directorate Army Human Resources, which disqualifies applicants with prior offences from being considered for corps transfers. The Complainant contended that the offence had been finalised almost two decades prior, and that the refusal to consider his application was unjust and detrimental to his career progression.



The investigation established that the SA Army's decision contravened Clause 10(g) of SA Army Instruction 051/2019, providing members with finalised disciplinary cases to be considered for transfer. It was further noted that the Complainant's career aspirations had not been considered. The complaint was upheld in terms of Section 6(7)(a) of the Act, with recommendations made to the MOD&MV to instruct the C SANDF to ensure the application is reviewed fairly and expeditiously. Relevant policy directives should be correctly applied within the SA Army.

COMPLAINT 20: TERMINATION FROM RESERVE FORCE – LACK OF PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

A former member of the Reserve Force approached the Office with a complaint concerning the termination of his service. The Complainant, formerly stationed at Sabelo Phama Field Workshop, stated that in 2019 he was sentenced by the Military Court and that the related charges were registered with the South African Police Services (SAPS) Criminal Record Centre. The Officer Commanding had initially advised that he could only be called up once he had a police clearance certificate.

Upon successfully obtaining clearance from the SAPS, the Complainant returned to his unit on 5 February 2025 to submit the documentation and request authority to undergo a Concurrent Health Assessment. He was informed that he had been removed from the Reserve Force without prior notification and was required to reapply for service.

The Office determined that the complaint was lodged within the prescribed timeframe and assumed jurisdiction in terms of Section 6(1) of the Act. Verification on the PERSOL system confirmed that the Complainant had been removed from the Reserve Force on 30 June 2024 under reason code BH (service completed) and was currently listed under controlled reserve. Despite the earlier conviction, the Complainant continued to serve until February 2022 and received a voluntary service bonus in January 2023. The Office is investigating the procedural and substantive fairness surrounding the termination.

COMPLAINT 21: BENEFITS – MEDICAL CLAIM SHORTFALL

The Office investigated a complaint from a former member of the SAMHS relating to a partial medical claim payment by the Regular Force Medical Continuation Fund (RFMCF). The complaint involved a surgical procedure undergone by the Complainant's wife. While the Complainant believed the Fund was liable for the full cost, an amount of R20,434.91 was unpaid, and the Complainant was required to settle the shortfall.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Office referred the relevant documentation, including the doctor's invoice, to the RFMCF. Following the review, the Fund confirmed that the claim would be fully settled. The Complainant was reimbursed for the outstanding amount, and the matter was resolved. The complaint was finalised in terms of Section 6(6)(b) of the Act.



COMPLAINT 22: REMUNERATION – NON-ADJUSTMENT OF SALARY FOLLOWING PROMOTION

On 28 February 2025, the Office received a complaint from a WO2, a serving member of the SANDF, regarding non-adjustment of salary following his promotion effective from 1 July 2022. The Complainant submitted that the corresponding salary notch adjustment had not been implemented despite receiving formal promotion documentation and assuming increased responsibilities.

The member lodged a formal grievance on 3 May 2023, and the Grievance Board responded on 22 November 2024. Dissatisfied with the outcome, he sought the intervention of the Military Ombud. The Complainant maintained that the applicable implementation instruction required a salary notch adjustment and that the delay adversely impacted his well-being.

The Office determined that the complaint met the time requirements in terms of Regulation 4(a) of the Military Ombud Complaints Regulations of 2015. The matter is under investigation to assess compliance with applicable regulations and whether the Complainant is entitled to retrospective salary adjustments.

COMPLAINT 23: OFFICIAL CONDUCT – COLLABORATIVE INVESTIGATION INTO MEDICAL ALLEGATION

On 15 April 2024, the Office received a request from the Office of the Health Ombud (OHO), via the Office of Health Standards Compliance, to undertake a joint investigation into alleged medical malpractice at a Military Hospital.

The complaint, submitted initially to the OHO by the spouse of a deceased SANDF member, related to the circumstances surrounding her death following heavy sedation during trauma treatment. The incident dated back to 1 March 2017 when the late member experienced psychological shock after encountering an intruder in her home. She was hospitalised at the Military Hospital and died shortly thereafter.

The collaborative investigation was undertaken under the existing memorandum of understanding between the two offices. Medical records and the BOI documentation were granted access. It was established that no post-mortem was conducted, and that the prescribed medication and dosage aligned with the reported condition. The OHO concluded that there was insufficient evidence to confirm malpractice. A final report was issued without deviation from the preliminary findings, and the matter was resolved.



CONCLUSION

The complaints highlighted in this appendix offer insight into the diverse and often complex nature of employment-related grievances brought before the Office. Spanning matters of promotion, benefits, transfers, dismissals, contractual obligations, and official conduct, the cases underscore the critical importance of procedural fairness, administrative responsiveness, and compliance with regulatory frameworks. In several instances, systemic challenges and delayed decision-making adversely impacted members' careers and well-being. Through impartial investigation and oversight, the Office played a pivotal role in upholding the rights of both serving and former members of the SANDF, ensuring accountability and contributing to the continual strengthening of internal grievance mechanisms within the defence environment.



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CONTACT DETAILS

Physical Address

Office of the Military Ombud
Block C4 Eco Origin, 349 Witch-Hazel Avenue,
Eco Park, Centurion

Postal Address

Private Bag X163, Centurion, Pretoria, 0144

Telephone: +27 (0)12 676 3800

Toll Free 080 726 6283 (080SAOMBUD)

Facsimile: +27 (0) 86 523 2296

Email: communications@milombud.org