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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA • REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA

BI-1155

**DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS  
DEPARTEMENT VAN BINNELANDSE SAKE**

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REF. 13/3/3/1 (Media)  
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The Chairpersons  
Sub-Committee of the Planning Committee  
Multi-Party Negotiating Process  
P O Box 307  
ISANDO  
1600

1993 -09- 13

Dear Gentlemen

**BURNING OF IDENTITY DOCUMENTS**

With further reference to your letter dated 24 August 1993 and pursuant to my reply to you dated 3 September 1993, I wish to further explain that identity documents are normally being kept by regional and district offices of the Department for a period of one year and if they are not collected during that period, they are returned to Head Office. This is however no rigid rule and it is applied as the particular circumstances in different offices demand. Identity documents are consequently in some instances being retained for periods longer than one year.

It must also be pointed out that the burglary took place in February 1993 while the burnt identity documents were discovered in August 1993. Furthermore, certain procedures have to be complied with after the date of issue of an

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identity document and it normally takes two to four weeks to reach the applicant directly or the office where the application was lodged.

If some of the documents were indeed issued two years prior to the discovery thereof, it would seem that they were in the possession of the district representative for a period of approximately 17 months at the time of the burglary. It is therefore of no serious consequence as there is nothing unaccountable in the course of events.

The claim or allegation that some of the burnt identity document's were issued a month prior to the discovery thereof remains questionable. Should the allegation be true, it can be concluded that those particular documents were stolen from individual applicants.

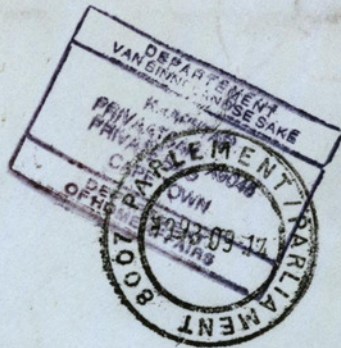
The Department's regional and district offices have authority to destroy certain parts of identity documents as prescribed, for example where documents are reissued in order to include a driver's licence. Page one of the original identity document is removed and shredded whereafter the worthless part of the identity document is incinerated personally by senior officials of the said offices. If the Department of Home Affairs had in fact been guilty of destroying identity documents, it would not have retained the documents in question for a period of two years before destroying it and furthermore would have incinerated it in the normal way in which case no remains would have been found.

Yours sincerely



**P J COLYN**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

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