

Offline!: 'Our frustration in dealing with Home Affairs'

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Offline!: 'Our frustration in dealing with Home Affairs' KwaZulu-Natal / 18 July 2019, 07:00am / Thobeka Ngema File picture: ANA pictures Durban - Over the past two weeks, two separate Westville families went to two separate Department of Home Affairs offices, where they were each told they could not be helped because the system was offline. William Manoto might have to cancel his trip to Lesotho in September with his son, because Umgeni Road Home Affairs told him to return in October to apply for his son's passport. Manoto had taken time off work twice to go to the Home Affairs office and on both occasions he was told the system was offline and that he should return another day. "I really need that passport because we're going on a trip to Lesotho in September, to visit my son's mother." On his last trip to Home Affairs, he was given a stamped slip stating he should return on October 15. Leela and Harry Naicker had gone to the Home Affairs offices in Pinetown to collect their Smart ID cards, when they were given the same "the system is offline" line. They returned last Wednesday and were again told the same thing. The elderly couple were at Home Affairs early, they had paid R30 for parking and sat in the long queues. "We came home without our Smart ID cards," Leela said. She said there were crowds of people waiting with their babies and the elderly. "The IT services are also bad because they are always offline," she added. Last week, the Public Servants Association said Home Affairs employees should not be blamed for poor service because there was recently an increase in the number of people at Home Affairs - pupils were applying late for documents before schools re-opened last Tuesday. "It's impossible for staff to process applications as the entire system is automated, and no work can be done when the system is offline," the PSA statement said. The union said it would write to the Minister of Home Affairs and demand solutions to the ongoing problems. The department failed to respond to a list of questions the Daily News sent last week. Among the questions asked was why the system was constantly offline after updates were recently carried out, and why Manoto was told to return in October. Last Monday, Home Affairs Deputy Minister Njabulo Nzuza made a surprise visit to the Umgeni Road branch. He promised he would turn things around at the branch. Daily News