

PSA: We warned govt of looming crisis at borders

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PSA: We warned govt of looming crisis at borders Updated Jan. 7, 2021, 7:04 a.m. | By Anastasi Mokgobu The Public Servants Association (PSA) says it warned government to expect an influx of people at the country's various borders. File Photo This comes as pressure is mounting at several of the country's border posts, including Beitbridge in Limpopo and the Maseru-Ficksburg border with Lesotho. The union says the severe staff shortages has resulted in officials struggling to cope with a high volume of travellers between South Africa and neighbouring countries during the busy festive period. The PSA's Claude Naicker says they welcome the government's decision to increase staff capacity. "We have warned the government as early as November last year, especially the Department of Home Affairs, Agriculture and Health that they are going to have an influx of people going out and coming into the country and they needed to increase the staff capacity. "Only when panic broke out that there were long queues and there is going to be an increase of Covid-19 infection then only the department they started to increase the capacity. "After our call and meeting with the Department of Home Affairs they decided to increase the staff." While the increased staff capacity has alleviated some of the pressure, Naicker says there are still issues at the Beitbridge border post in Limpopo. "From the latest report the increased staff capacity has alleviated some of the pressure, the queues are moving at a faster pace, but not so much at the Beitbridge because there were other issues about trucks and cargo moving in and out of the country. The congestion already happened before the increased staff could come into place, they are going to have a little bit of a problem but hopefully with the increased capacity the queues will start to move." He believes the government failed to develop a working strategy to manage the country's border posts and ensure compliance with Covid-19 regulations. "Apart from increased capacity, the government needed to develop a good strategy to manage the border posts during the holiday with the Covid-19 compliance also in place, we have passengers who are transporting goods and services, holidaymakers and normal visitors yes the increased capacity will help but without a working strategy in place, they still going to land in hot water." Jacaranda FM