

MEDIA RELEASE	Home Affairs extended working hours: PSA noted media reports with concern
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The Public Servants Association (PSA), the majority Union at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), has noted media reports about the DHA's plans to extend working hours into weekends with concern.

The Minister of Home Affairs, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, was quoted as prematurely proposing this as a solution to deal with backlogs. The PSA maintains that the extension of the DHA's working hours must be negotiated with labour before implementation in line with a previous judgement issued by the Constitutional Court. The backlogs and long queue are a result of the DHA's constant off-line and dysfunctional live-capture system. System failures have caused dissatisfaction and frustration amongst members of the public, with DHA employees having to deal with public anger. The PSA thus strongly condemns the Minister for describing staff as being "disinterested".

The PSA engaged the Director-General of the DHA on this matter and also urged the DHA to issue a media statement to explain to the public the challenges experienced owing to the dysfunctional system. The PSA further urged the DHA to upgrade its IT systems as a matter of urgency.

The matter was tabled at the Departmental Bargaining Chamber and the DHA was afforded an opportunity to review the proposed working hours arrangements for further engagement. The PSA emphasises that the DHA must pay overtime for any extended working hours as per the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act*, especially for work performed on Saturdays.

The PSA supports the mandate of the DHA to render an efficient and effective service to the country's citizens, but the relevant employment legislative frameworks and best practices must be applied in doing so. The PSA will continue participating into negotiation processes to find an amicable solution.

END