

MEDIA RELEASE **PSA: Minister of Home Affairs' initiatives and plans on correct path**

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) applauds the commitment by the Minister of Home Affairs to intensify inspection targeting illegal employment in various sectors, including restaurants, spaza shops, farms, and mines.

The employment of illegal workers undermines labour rights in South Africa, allowing employers to pay wages well below the legal minimum and exploit vulnerable workers who fear deportation. The PSA demands that all employers comply with labour laws by applying for work visas and registering their employees. If failing to do so, they must prioritise the employment of South Africans or immigrants who are lawfully in the country.

The unemployment crisis, particularly amongst graduates and young people, cannot be resolved whilst employers exploit the desperation of undocumented immigrants who are willing to offer cheap labour. The PSA supports the Minister's efforts and calls on other stakeholders, including the South African Police Service and the Department of Employment and Labour, to play their part. The PSA also urges the National Prosecuting Authority to intensify prosecutions against employers employing illegal foreigners, ensuring they face appropriate penalties, including imprisonment and heavy fines.

The Minister of Home Affairs, in his interview on *safm's Sunrise Breakfast Show*, indicated that one of the challenges he has identified at the Department of Home Affairs thus far, is that the Department is functioning at 45% of its staff capacity. This is a confirmation of the PSA's continuous statements that staff shortages in government departments have a negative impact on service delivery.

The Department of Home Affairs is currently experiencing serious backlogs with the processing of visa applications and extensions. The PSA agrees with the Minister that capacity challenges must be addressed urgently, including improving the business-process model and enhancing the ICT infrastructure to ensure system efficiency. It is imperative for the Department of Home Affairs to be well resourced with sufficient skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced personnel to ensure that it can deliver on its mandate.

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